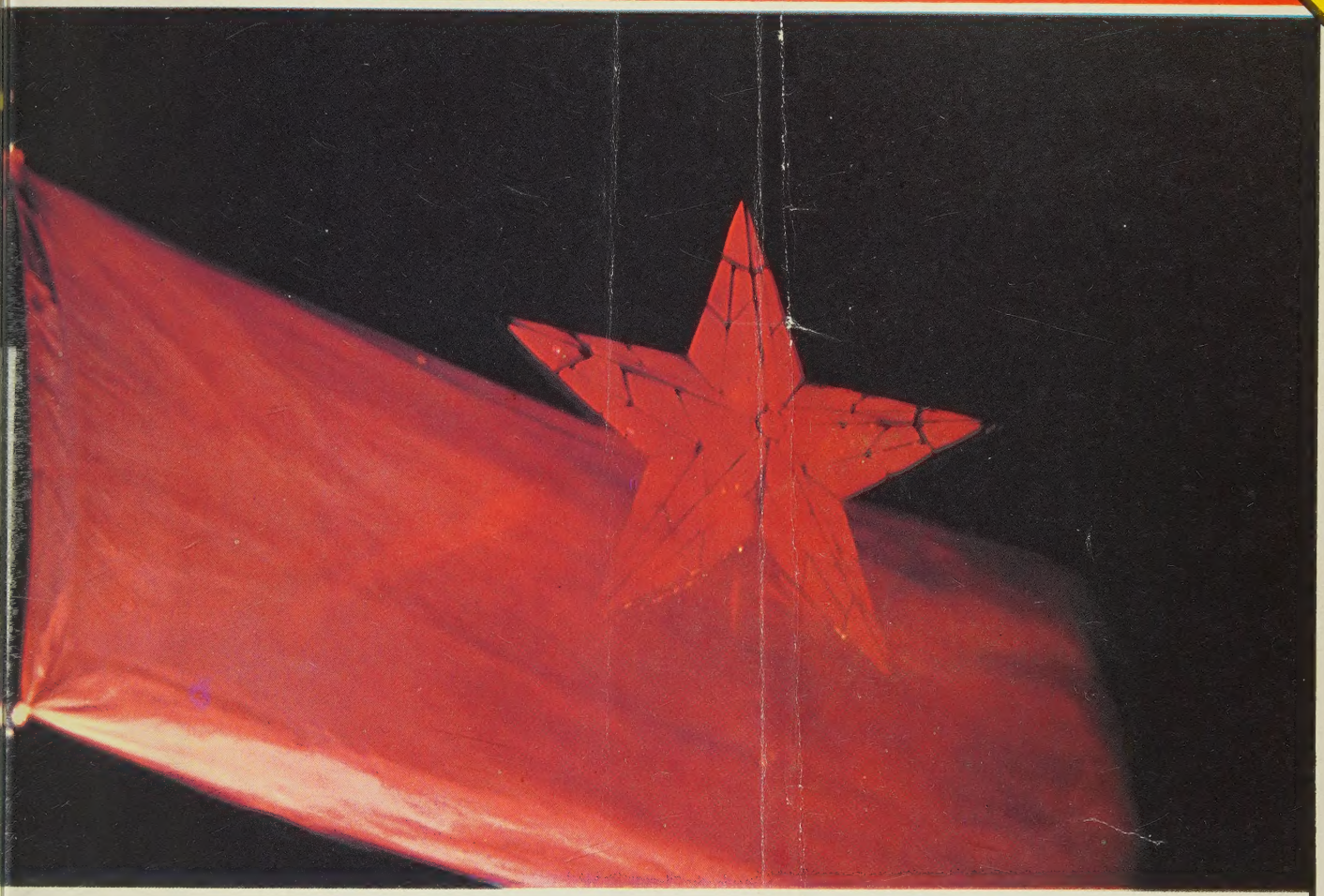
27
JULY 1988
A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

PARTY CONFERENCE DELEGATES SPEAK



Strategy and tactics of perestroika

PROPERTY OF THE LIBRARY
JUN 18 1988
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

ВСЕСОЮЗНАЯ XIX КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ КПСС

Drawing by Vasily Tereshchenko

NEW TIMES

No. 27, July 1988

Founded 1943

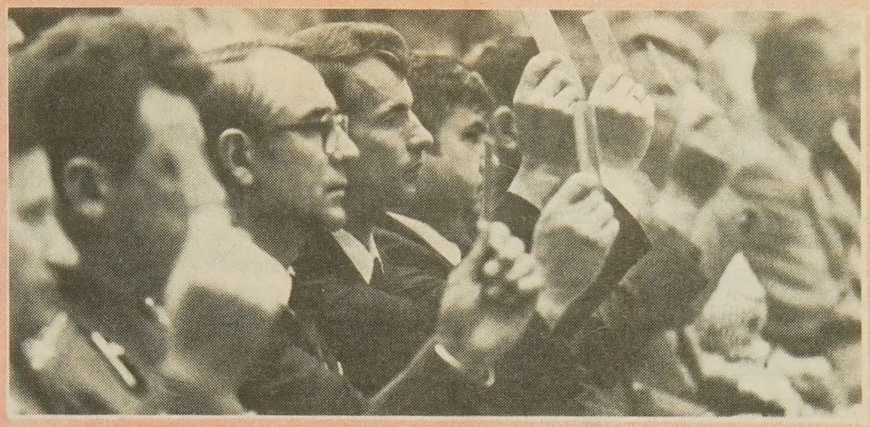
Editor-in-Chief
VITALY IGNATENKO

Associate editors:
L. ABRAMOV,
L. BEZYMENSKY,
V. CHERNYAVSKY,
V. GANYUSHKIN,
S. GOLYAKOV,
V. KULISTIKOV,
L. MLECHIN,
A. PIN,
D. POGORZHELSKY,
A. PUMPYANSKY,
Y. SHEVCHENKO,
V. STARSHINOV,

Designer I. Shein

Editor of English edition:
E. Smirnov

The 19th All-Union Party Conference marks a new stage in the struggle for perestroika and democratization. On behalf of the CPSU Central Committee, the Conference was addressed by Mikhail Gorbachev.



CONTENTS:

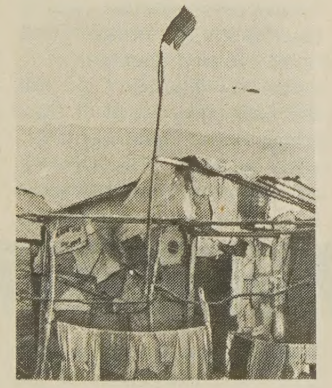
2
Glasnost

4
Mikhail Gorbachev
WE ARE THE MAKERS OF OUR OWN FUTURE

9
The world and us
THREE VIEWS OF PERESTROIKA

11
Observer's view
Lev Bezymensky
CONCERNING A SENSE OF REALITY

12
Haiti
Vladislav Chirkov
DEMOCRATIC VEIL TORN AWAY

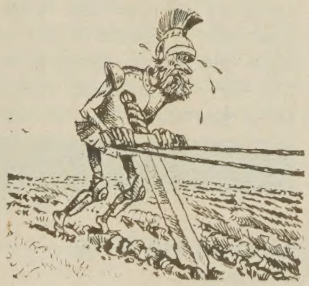


13
France
Lev Makarevich
STALEMATE AT OPENING?

14
Italy
Leonid Popov
ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER STEPS DOWN

16
Observer's view
Sergei Golyakov
THE SAME OLD STORY

17
In search of the future
CONVERSION. IS IT POSSIBLE?



19
Panama
Ornel Urriola
GENERAL NORIEGA AND GHOST HUNTERS

21
Riposte
Evgeny Shevelyov
THE PROFESSOR'S "SUGGESTION"

22
New Times poll
PERESTROIKA IN MY LIFE

25
Exclusive for New Times
AN UPHILL CLIMB
Interview with Roman Malinowski, Marshal of the Polish Sejm

27
Letters, Diaries
Andrei Golovanchikov
MY EXPERIENCES IN AFGHANISTAN

31
Human rights
Leonid Mlechin
HYDE PARK SOCIALIST STYLE

32
Guest performances
Gwen McKinney
FESTIVAL OF AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURE

Our address: Pushkin Square, Moscow, GSP, 103782, U.S.S.R. Telephones: 229-88-72, 209-07-67
Published in Russian, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Polish, Czech and Greek
Telex: 411164a NEWT SU, 411164b NEWT SU, 411164c NEWT SU ● Telefax: 200-41-92, 200-10-38
Cables: New Times Pushkin Square Moscow
Printed by the Moskovskaya Pravda press in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Aeroflot will deliver our weekly to any country in the world

OPINIONS

Lev GOLYAS,
engineer,
Togliatti, U.S.S.R.

■ Perestroika as a revolutionary process gives us a chance to put an end to the social, economic, moral and political corrosion of our society. Our goal is to build a communist society, and that is why there must be only one party in our country. However, conditions must be provided in the party for strict observance of the rule that unity is the result of competition. How are we to achieve this in practice and make the contest of opinions the norm?

I think several candidates should be nominated for the post of secretary of a district or regional Party committee or a place on the Central Committee, and they should publicly (at meetings or in the press) make known their plans for tackling local or national problems. The contested post goes to the candidate who receives most votes in an election by secret ballot.

It will, of course, be necessary to reorganize the central party bodies. The Central Committee should not have unlimited powers. It should be counterbalanced by another party body, for instance, the Central Control Committee.

John MABBS,
Colwyn Bay,
Britain

■ Whilst the U.S.S.R. is now seeking ways of "opening up," we in Britain are seeing the introduction of "closing down" and greater secrecy. We are watching your progress intently, and many of us would wish to give you support in facing the changes that should lead to an improvement in living standards throughout your country and will probably help the rest of the world and the peoples who share that common home.

V.PEREPELKIN,
Sochi, U.S.S.R.

■ I expect much from the Party conference which is to open soon in Moscow. However, one thing is worrying me, namely, the passive stand of some of the delegates. Not long ago I watched a television interview with a builder who had been elected a delegate to the Party conference. Asked by a journalist why he was going to the Party forum, the builder replied: "I want to tell my workmates about everything I hear there.

But is it necessary to be a delegate for this? I think the builder's reply is indicative of the stereotyped thinking characteristic of the period of stagnation. Such an attitude serves no purpose. The future of perestroika, and hence our future, largely depends on the issues to be raised at the conference. Its participants must be dedicated to the cause of perestroika. They must be active champions of it.

Voigt VEIT,
Erfurt,
German
Democratic Republic

■ More and more truthful and exhaustive information has recently been appearing in New Times. It amply reflects the socialist pluralism of opinions and shows the revolutionary changes taking place in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

As a member of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, I am studying Marxism-Leninism. The theoretical and practical activities of Mikhail Gorbachev are, in my opinion, a creative development of Lenin's ideas and their application to present-day conditions. The policy of new thinking enunciated in your country will deliver mankind from nuclear missiles. The initial step in this direction has already been made.

Perestroika will consolidate the victory of socialism, for thanks to it you will achieve a qualitatively new level of economic development, higher labour productivity and, hence, better living standards. Today the Soviet leaders are not only proclaiming the need for changes (this happened in the past as well) but are carrying them out in practice. And that is what matters most.

Christel GRIMM,
and
Petra WALLER,
Hamburg,
Federal
Republic of Germany

■ This letter is, in fact, addressed to Mikhail Gorbachev. Some time ago we read his book on perestroika and can only hope that his revolutionary plan to transform Soviet society will be realized within the next few years. We wish you and your "team" a lot of courage, strength and endurance in achieving the objectives you have set.

A MATTER AT ISSUE

Liakwat HATTAK,
West Berlin,

■ Having been a reader of New Times for ten years, I have noticed that the way you now treat some issues has substantially changed. For instance, interviews with capitalist leaders are no longer accompanied by comments. This is in fact normal practice in the capitalist media.

One further point. I have the impression you will soon admit that the protection of the Afghan revolution was a mistake. You write that the situation in Afghanistan has been returning to normal since the evacuation of Soviet troops began. Don't you think that the continuation of the civil war may be the upshot, and that in effect, by pulling out, you ae not helping the Afghan people?

I think you sometimes fail to notice that the reforms being carried out in your country are gradually bringing the Soviet and capitalist socieites closer together. Some people are already demanding establishment of an opposition party. Small privately-run enterprises have been set up and financial incentives introduced. What's next? Is there a limit to these changes? What will happen to socialism in the Soviet Union and in the socialist countries that follow your example?

Valery CHERNOV,
worker,
Moscow,
U.S.S.R.

■ I closely followed the Gorbachev-Reagan meeting in the hope that the question of broader tourist exchanges between our countries, possibly on a non-currency basis, would be raised at the talks. Many Soviet people would like to go and see for themselves how Americans live. Many of us would like to be the carriers of citizens' diplomacy. But, unfortunately,

GLASNOST

travelling to the United States, and to other countries as well, is very expensive.

Is it not possible to solve the tourist problem now when relations have been normalized at the highest level and the West is beginning to accept Moscow's policy based on new thinking? I think life on our planet would be less troubled if broad tourist exchanges were organized.

CARRYING OUT THE DISCUSSION

Valery POCHEPKO,
teacher of scientific communism,
Leningrad,
U.S.S.R.

■ Issue 22/88 carried an article by Tair Tairov entitled "Democracy Must be Guaranteed." Certainly democracy needs guarantees, especially now when broad democratization is going full steam in all spheres of life in our socialist society and when there is opposition to perestroika. We should draw lessons from the past if we want to bring about truly revolutionary changes.

The author of the article rightfully notes the factors that hindered the democratization process in the years of bureaucratic, barrack-type socialism. I agree that the social pathology experienced by our society is rooted in the nature and principles of the political system of those years. However, in my opinion, the article fails to analyze the circumstances that halted the democratization process initiated in the 1920s.

Timofei KUZIN,
Sverdlovsk,
U.S.S.R.

■ A former teacher of history for many years, I was inculcated with the idea of the "leader of the people" and, in the spirit of this idea, taught history to my pupils. Other teachers were plainly in the same position. The teacher was straitjacketed. He was not allowed to say what he himself thought about this or that event. Young people learned half-truths and sometimes untruths about the history of their country. Great damage was done to the education of the young. It should be admitted that these shortcomings have not been completely overcome.

Few changes have been made in history textbooks, especially in the chapters dealing with the period of the personality cult. The crimes of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s are mentioned briefly,
without explanation. Many teachers are still cautious about telling the whole truth about the events not only of modern but also contemporary history, though they can already talk openly about them, because a lot of material has been provided by the media.

I hope that dogmatism, bureaucratism and other negative phenomena of the past will be completely eradicated in the teaching of history in the coming school and academic year. In short, perestroika is also necessary in the teaching of history.

John CHERVENY,
Detroit,
U.S.A.

■ After months of agonizing I have decided to join the discussion of the painful past. It is not easy because I am a product of that era.

The false theoretical justification that the class struggle intensifies once workers take power was the poisoned well that everybody drank from.

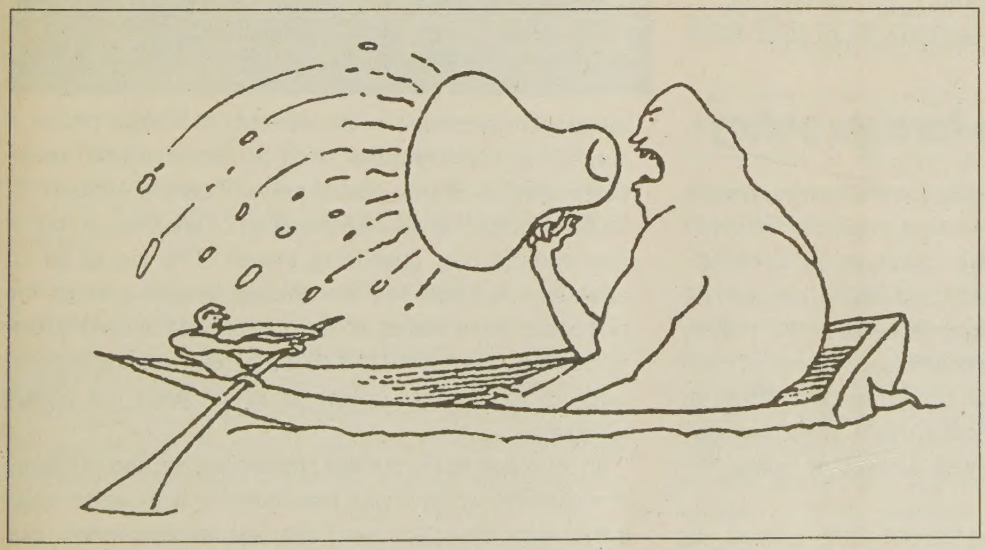
Why did the policy of lawlessness and repression receive considerable support? There can be no justification for it. But to understand it we must see it in its historical setting and not through the prism of 1988 hindsight.

The policy of collective security against fascism was weakened considerably by the repressive internal policies. At the early stage many social democrats, liberals and honest progressives did not see too much difference between fascism and Stalinism. I think this explains in part why a united front against fascism was only formed several years later.

As a veteran of the second world war, an honorably discharged navy radio operator, I know what it is to be declared a traitor. I became a victim of the U.S. version of the "painful past." My only crime was to speak out against a book distorting some facts about the war. I was summoned to a Congressional Committee to give explanations and was then physically thrown out of my job. Our historians call the McCarthy period a period of madness. Such ironies are not new.

GLASNOST

Artist's comment



Drawing by A. Chodorowski, Poland

ВСЕСОЮЗНАЯ XIX КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ КПСС

Mikhail Gorbachev:

We are the makers of our own future

"Soviet people want a clear perspective. They want full-blooded and unconditional democracy. They want rule of law without reservations. Glasnost in all things, big and small. Brotherhood and comradeship in their relations. Respect for hard work and talent, faithful service for the cause and the good of society.

"We are convinced in the vitality of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine which has scientifically substantiated the possibility of building a society of social justice and a civilization of free and equal people. That is what guides us in our revolutionary perestroika," CPSU Central Committee General Secretary said in his report to the 19th National Party Conference.

We follow with excerpts from the report.

Drastic change in foreign policy

In assessing Soviet foreign policy in the postwar period, we must keep in mind that imperialism, in effect, created an extraordinary situation around us and our allies. The Western military bloc, headed by the United States, behaved towards socialism with open aggressiveness. The military threat became for us a constant factor, and it has not been removed to this day. The Soviet Union together with its allies was simply bound to respond to this – as, for that matter, to the determined psychological warfare against the socialist countries.

Nevertheless, while drawing lessons from the past, we have to acknowledge that command methods of administration were extended to the conduct of foreign policy. It sometimes happened that even decisions of vital importance were taken by a narrow circle of people without collective, comprehensive examination or analysis, on occasion without duly consulting friends. This led to an inadequate reaction to international events and to the policies of other states, if not to erroneous decisions. Unfortunately, the cost of this to the people and the implications of this or that course of action were not always weighed up.

In response to the nuclear challenge to us and to the entire socialist world it was necessary to achieve strategic parity with the U.S.A. And this was accomplished. But, while concentrating enormous funds and attention on the

military aspect of countering imperialism, we did not always make use of the political opportunities opened up by the fundamental changes in the world in our efforts to assure the security of our state, to scale down tensions, and promote mutual understanding between nations. As a result, we allowed ourselves to be drawn into an arms race, which could not but affect the country's socio-economic development and its international standing.

As the arms race approached a critical point, our traditional political and social activities for peace and disarmament began, against this background, to lose their appeal. To put it even more bluntly, without overturning the logic of this course, we could actually have found ourselves on the brink of a military confrontation.

Hence, what was needed was not just a refinement of foreign policy, but its drastic reshaping.

This called for new political thinking. The foundations of that thinking were formulated by the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th party Congress. They placed our international activities in the conditions of perestroika on a philosophical footing. The new thinking is not a final and consummate doctrine. It is dialectical, which makes possible the constant perfection and development of our policy in keeping with the forward march of real life. And, needless to say, in keeping with our socialist choice and Leninist principles.

Priority of common human values

From the standpoint of our day, with its mounting nuclear menace, exacerbation of other global problems, and progressing internationalization of all the processes in the world – ever more integral and interdependent for all its contradictions – we have sought a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between working-class interests and those of humanity as a whole, an idea built into Marxism from the outset. This led us to the conclusion that common human values have a priority in our age. This premise is the core of the new political thinking.

The new political thinking has enabled us to appreciate more fully how vitally important to contemporary international relations are the moral values that have over the centuries been evolved by nations, and generalized and formulated by humanity's great minds.

In the course of our analysis of the fundamental changes in the world we are overcoming many stereotypes, which limited our options and, to a certain extent, supplied arguments to those who indulged in misrepresenting our real intentions.

A big role was played by our establishment of broad contacts with representatives of other countries – from heads of state and government to ordinary citizens, with universally recognized authorities in the scientific and cultural world, outstanding writers, leaders and delegations of political parties, public organizations and movements, with trade union, social democratic and religious leaders, and members of parliament.

Such intensive direct contacts have made possible a "rediscovery," as it were, of the Soviet Union by the outer world, while we, for our part, have got the chance to obtain a better picture and understanding of the world around us, to take part in discussing its problems and in searching for ways of solving them, of extracting whatever is useful from ideas originating in other cultures and spiritual traditions, as was reflected, for example, in the 1986 Delhi Declaration. With the help of such feedback it has also become easier to reach mutual understanding on the significance of such values as freedom and democracy.

All this has imparted a dynamism to Soviet foreign policy and made it possible to come forward with a whole series of major initiatives.

A key factor in the new thinking is the concept of freedom of choice. We are convinced that this is a universal principle for international relations at a time when the very survival of civilization has become the principal problem of the world, its common denominator.

This concept stems from the unprecedented and mounting diversity of the world. We are witnessing such a phenomenon as the active involvement in world history of millions upon millions of people who for centuries remained passive. These millions are taking to the arena of independent history-making in entirely new conditions. Against the background of a universally growing national awareness they will yet have their say in choosing the path of national development.

In this situation the imposition of a social system, way of life, or policies from outside by any means, let alone military, are dangerous trappings of past epochs. Sovereignty and independence, equal rights and noninterference are becoming universally recognized rules of international relations, which is in itself a major achievement of the 20th century. To oppose freedom of choice is to come out against the objective tide of history itself. That is why power politics in all their forms and manifestations are historically obsolescent.

In short, we are profoundly convinced that the new thinking and the policies based on it are a correct reflection of the urgent needs and imperatives of the contemporary world. They have revived hope and cleared the way to fundamental changes in human thinking.

Has the war danger been staved off?

In answer to the question which is uppermost in the minds of Soviet men and women and on which they want to hear an assessment of the work accomplished in three years – whether the war danger has been staved off – we can say: yes, definitely.

What is this embodied in? First of all, in the fact that the axis of international affairs is shifting away from confrontation towards cooperation, mutual understanding, and negotiations that hold out the promise of specific results, first and foremost, with respect to weapons of mass destruction. There has been an improvement in Soviet-American relations. A treaty has been concluded on scrapping a portion of nuclear armaments. The European process has become brisker – at the interstate and, especially, at the nongovernmental level.

The Geneva accords and the withdrawal that our military

contingent has begun from Afghanistan have become an international milestone in the political settlement of regional conflicts, which are fraught with a danger to world peace and which hinder the progress of the nations.

From the platform of our Party Conference permit me, on behalf of the Party and the people, to express deep appreciation once again to the soldiers and officers, the civilian experts and all those whose life has been affected and who have been seared by this war. Our soldiers are leaving Afghanistan at the bidding of their country, which has displayed wisdom and has, during these years, acquired new political and moral experience, and a deeper understanding of the contemporary world, of its contradictions and difficulties in its march into the future.

All in all, comrades, an analysis of the already existing realities justifies the assumption that if it proves possible to consolidate and build upon these realities, the world at the turn of the century will be shaped by the following trends:

– a gradual demilitarization and humanization of international relations, with reason, knowledge, and moral principles – rather than selfish ambitions and prejudices – at long last motivating states in resolving numerous contradictions in the world and achieving a balance of interests, the right of each to freedom of choice being recognized;

– assuring the security of states will shift increasingly from the sphere of a correlation of military potentials into the sphere of political interaction and the strict fulfilment of international commitments; a universal system of international security will be taking shape, primarily through enhancing the role and effectiveness of the United Nations;

– the colossal growth of the scientific and technological potential will be employed in a more civilized manner for the joint solution of global economic, ecological, energy, food, medical and other problems for the benefit of mankind as a whole;

– the diversified and voluntary intercourse of independent states and peoples will reliably serve their mutual enrichment, material and spiritual, and will reinforce the structure of universal peace.

Are there any illusions here? Have the imperialist sources of aggression and war vanished? No. We do not forget about the threat to peace issuing from imperialist militarism and hold that there are no guarantees as yet that the positive processes that have begun are irreversible. The new political thinking, in fact, enables us to see and find new opportunities for opposing policies of strength on a broader political basis than in the past. These opportunities are also reinforced by new objective factors that have arisen in the latter half of our century.

Soviet foreign policy, notwithstanding certain errors and miscalculations in the past, has on the whole a great deal to its credit in the eyes of the country, socialism, and the whole of humanity. Perestroika has required a new quality of it, both in substance and in form. Like domestic policy, it must in practice absorb the collective thinking of the Party and the people, and promptly take into account not only ongoing but predictable changes. Objective processes in the world and our capabilities must become the subject of constant scholarly and general discussions involving the public and its organizations. The quality of information on iternational affairs must be improved by an order of magnitude. Within the framework of the reform of the political system there has to be established an effective constitutionally-authorized mechanism for a businesslike and competent discussion of international issues.

The Soviets' political weight

Not a single question concerning the state, the economy or the social fabric can be decided if the Soviets are bypassed. The Party's economic, social and nationalities policy should be carried out above all via the Soviets of People's Deputies as the organs of government by the people.

● The need has fully matured to reorganize the management of local affairs along the lines of self-government, self-financing and self-sufficiency.

The Soviets should bear full responsibility and be independent in managing the development of the areas they run, and economic enterprises, no matter what their superior agency, should contribute a bigger share of their profits to the budget of the Soviets.

The Soviets should have adequate sources of income based on long-term quotas; this income should include revenue received from all economic enterprises on the territory under their jurisdiction. The Soviets should accumulate funds for tackling large-scale projects.

● Many participants in the discussion have suggested that local government bodies should have standing chairmen of Soviets and presidiums of Soviets in order to divide functions properly and enhance control by the representative bodies over the activities of the executive committees.

● Since enhancing the role of the elected bodies and of their deputies is imperative, one can describe as justified the view of those comrades who hold that, given the new tasks, it is very important to back the role of the Soviets as people's representative bodies with the prestige of the Party. But that should be done on a strictly legal basis.

Here, the most practicable way would be to nominate, as a rule, first secretaries of Party committees to serve as chairmen of the respective Soviets. Placed at the head of Soviets and their presidiums, they will be very active in helping improve all aspects of the work performed by the popular representation bodies.

The nomination of Party leaders to chair Soviets will make them more effectively answerable to the working people because the elections at the sessions will be conducted by secret ballot. This means that the mandate received by a Party leader from Communists will be verified and confirmed by representatives of the people each time, at all levels of the system of Soviets.

● A better division of powers between representative and executive bodies should be furthered by the adoption of a rule barring members of an executive committee and the chiefs of its desks and departments from serving as deputies of the respective Soviet, in which case, as is the practice now, they become their own masters and, naturally, seek to make life easier for themselves. It would also be useful to apply this principle to judges, procurators, arbitraters and, at the level of the U.S.S.R. and of Union and Autonomous republics, to heads of ministries and chiefs of government agencies.

● It is also time we introduced a number of democratic restrictions on the duration of service in elective offices. Our past record shows that the absence of these restrictions was a prime cause of abuses of power both centrally and locally.

The reference in the Theses was only to elective offices. But many participants in the discussion suggested that it be extended to cover the posts whose holders were to be appointed and endorsed by the Soviets. We believe the proposal is worth supporting.

Real political weight carried by a people's deputy is essential to enhance the activity of the Soviets, and this is something which is linked directly with the entire process of forming representative government bodies. Hence the need for a resolute renewal of our election system.

We have already embarked upon this path in acting on the decisions of the 27th Party Congress.

Generally, comrades, the body of deputies should from now on be formed above all through an active and free expression of the will of the electorate, not according to quotas sent down from above.

As far as we understand, there is a public consensus on reducing the size of Soviets at the local level.

As the Central Committee's Theses for the Conference were being discussed, widespread support was expressed for the proposal to introduce a single five-year term of office for all Soviets.

● The CPSU Central Committee is submitting the following proposals for consideration by the Conference.

Representation of the working people in the top echelon of government be extended considerably.

With this end in view, direct representation of scientists, workers' and other organizations incorporated into our political system should be added to the currently existing territorial representation of the entire population on the Soviet of the Union and the representation of our nations and nationalities on the Soviet of Nationalities. Thus 1,500 deputies would be elected, as they are now, from the territorial and national districts, and approximately another 750 deputies would be elected at the congresses or at plenary sessions of the governing bodies of Party, trade union, cooperative, youth, women's veterans', academic and art workers' organizations. The list of these organizations and the quotas of their representation could be incorporated into the Constitution.

All these deputies, elected for a five-year term, would comprise a new representative supreme government body – the Congress of the U.S.S.R. People's Deputies. It would be convened annually to decide on the country's more important constitutional, political and socio-economic issues.

The Congress of People's Deputies would elect from among its members a relatively small (say, 400- to 450-strong) bicameral U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet which would consider and make decisions on all legislative, administrative and monitoring questions and direct the activities of the bodies accountable to it and of the lower-level Soviets. It would be a standing supreme government body accountable to the Congress of People's Deputies. In this way, all legislative and monitoring work would be concentrated directly within the Supreme Soviet and its commissions. That would be a new step forward in the democratization of the top echelons of government. We can also consider a periodic renewal of part of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet.

Party leader and supreme authority

● Some believe it would be proper to return to the practice which existed under Lenin, when the leader of the Party was simultaneously the head of government. Others object to combining Party and government posts. Still others call for the establishment of the post of President of the U.S.S.R. There is also a body of opinion which points out that the situation where the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in fact acts as the country's top official runs counter to the concept of a state ruled by law. Many other views are expressed too.

That, comrades, is a serious question, and our Conference should discuss it thoroughly so that the best possible solution to it could be found in the course of the reform of our political system.

● In the opinion of the CPSU Central Committee, establishing the post of President of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet would be in line with enhancing the role played by the supreme representative bodies and by the entire system of the Soviets of People's Deputies, strengthening the rule-by-law basis of government and improving the representation of the Soviet Union in world affairs. It should be ruled that the President shall be elected and recalled by secret ballot, and be fully answerable and accountable to, the Congress of the U.S.S.R. People's Deputies. Given the overall strengthening of the role played by representative bodies, the President of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet should be granted sufficiently broad state authority powers. Specifically, the President could exercise overall guidance in the drafting of legislation and of major socio-economic programmes, decide on the key issues of foreign policy, defence and national security, chair the Defence Council, submit proposals on nominating the Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, and discharge several other duties traditionally connected with the Presidency.

We also believe that the government structure at top level should comprise a Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet which would be guided in its work by the President of the Supreme Soviet.

● It would be useful to enhance the status of the standing commissions to be established by the supreme government body and comprising members of the Supreme Soviet and of the Congress of People's Deputies. These commissions could be established by the chambers both separately and jointly (joint committees).

In view of their new tasks, the commissions and committees should be granted much broader powers.

Specifically, a provision could be adopted stating that decisions on major issues of domestic and foreign policy and on the appointment of heads of ministries and departments and other officials could be taken only after a preliminary discussion of these matters in the commissions and committees. it would be adivsable to expand the practice of open hearings in the commissions and committees and to set up special groups of deputies to study questions of acute public interest.

There is also the issue of establishing, within the structure of supreme authority, a Constitutional Supervision Committee to be elected by the Congress of the U.S.S.R. People's Deputies. It would verify the constitutionality of our legislation and other legal instruments and have sufficient powers to do it. Incidentally, this committee would be an additional guarantee of democratic control over the activities of all officials, including those in top-level posts.

New structure of the Party apparatus

● Now about the elective bodies of the Party. Here we should change a good deal, and change it cardinally. First of all the prestige of elective bodies as full-fledged representatives of Communists should be restored. The secretaries, bureaux, and especially the Party apparatus should be under the control of the elective Party body. From now on there should never be a situation when members of a bureau or a Party apparatus would allow themselves above members of elective committees.

● It is not less, and perhaps even more, essential that Party committees should discuss more important questions of principle associated with the exercise by the Party of its vanguard role in the new conditions and with its organizing and political work among the masses.

● Meanwhile, instead of improving, things kept deteriorating from year to year. As problems of economic development grew increasingly complicated, the Party became involved in efforts to tackle all kinds of managerial issues, and its apparatus expanded accordingly.

● The greater part played by the colleges of electors, and the division of functions between Party and government bodies have put the question of introducing changes into the structure and composition of the Party apparatus on a practical plane. We will have to give up the present division of the CPSU Central Committee apparatus by spheres of management, restructure its composition in line with the Party's current functions, and reduce its size.

● It appears that, taking the discussion at the Conference and the emergence of our common position on this score into account, we could make an early start of creating a new structure of the Party apparatus.

● Today, reacting to the restoration of the truth and justice, to the renunciation of everyting that deformed the socialist ideology and practice, to the destruction of stereotypes and dogmas, some people maintain that this is eroding the principles and pillars of socialism, and maligning its history. We cannot agree with this, comrades. Most emphatically not! We have no right to permit perestroika to founder on the rocks of dogmatism and conservatism, on anyone's prejudices and personal ambitions. What is at stake is the country's future, the future of socialism. And it is our duty to explain the acuteness of the situation to those who had not yet realized it. There can be no question of compromise on this most essential of issues.

I want to say categorically, here at the Conference, that we shall continue to develop all truly socialist values, and firmly eliminate everything that distorts revolutionary theory and the image of socialism.

Socialism as we see it

● We see socialism as a system of true and real humanism in which the interests of man come first and foremost.

● We see socialism as a system with an effective and dynamic economy based on the finest achievements of scientific and technological progress and ensuring the highest possible productivity of labour – an economy that is directly geared to satisfying the needs of society, to which it flexibly adapts itself.

● We see socialism as a system of social justice combining social guarantees of man's vital need for labour, health protection, education, housing, social security, and consistent abidance by the principle of distribution according to work done, uprooting all forms of wage-levelling and social parasitism. It is a society in which the abilities of the individual, the individual's fruitful labour, skills, and talents, are valued most of all and are duly rewarded materially and morally.

● We see socialism as a system of lofty culture and morality. It inherits and multiplies the finest achievements of humanity's spiritual development and rich moral heritage. It is a society in which working people's lives are materially and spiritually full-blooded and rich; it rejects consumerism, amorality, and cultural primitivism. The concept of lofty culture also encompasses society's ecological culture – a concerned and sensible attitude towards the natural environment and people's productive activity, implying the conservation and cultivation of natural wealth.

● We see socialism as a system of genuine people's rule in which all working people have every opportunity to express their needs and interests and to participate in running social processes, and in which the estrangement between the individual and government is overcome. It is a society of socialist self-government by the people, of profound and consistent democracy in running the economy and the social processes, a society in which rule by law, openness and glasnost prevail.

● We see socialism as a system of the true equality of all nations and nationalities, a system in which they are assured social and spiritual advancement and mutual enrichment, in which there is no room for any strife between nations, for nationalist and chauvinist prejudices, and in which internationalism and the fraternity of nations rule supreme.

● Finally, we see socialism as a system which organically aspires by its nature and interests to peace and to strengthening cooperation and joint action by the fraternal socialist countries, and to normal, civilized relations between all nations and states on the democratic principles of equality, noninterference in each other's affairs, and recognition of the sovereign right of the peoples to shape their future as they see fit.

This is the democratic and humane image of socialism that we have in mind when we speak of the qualitatively new state of our society as an important stage in the advance to communism.

The coming years will determine the future of our country, the destiny of the Soviet system. We are the makers of our own future. We ourselves and none other.

Three views of perestroika

Authority and responsibility

Mitja Ribičič,
member of the Union of Federation of Yugoslavia

The process of détente that began in the seventies was somewhat halted on the eve of the eighties and in the first half of this decade. Now it is again gathering momentum. The Soviet Union was the chief proponent of the idea of European cooperation.

The European process will depend greatly on the reforms in the socialist countries and, first and foremost, on those in the Soviet Union, the biggest of them. The European socialist countries are now at a stage of re-assessment and perestroika. This process now embraces practically all these countries. Some are prepared to go very far along the road of reform, others are not, but the process continues. It is also under way in Yugoslavia.

Socialism must correspond fully to the realities of the modern world, which is complex and interconnected, and to the realities of the scientific and technological revolution. Certain objective features have to be taken into account. For example, the market. For the market is neither a capitalist, nor a socialist phenomenon. It is a scientific phenomenon. It reflects the specific realities of economic relations under both capitalism and socialism. And this reality must be recognized and accepted. Then the socialist countries, for instance, will find it easier to establish relations with the West. There will be more opportunities to cooperate and make joint capital investments. We in the socialist countries are also beginning to have a better understanding of the relations of ownership under socialism. Cooperative and individual forms of ownership can coexist perfectly well with public ownership...

Speaking of the reforms in the socialist countries, one cannot ignore the political aspect, specifically, the reforms of the Communist parties themselves, the vanguard of the working class and society. Mikhail Gorbachev put forward a number of ideas in this context – bold and fruitful ideas, about the development of inner-party democracy and relations between the majority and the minority. In the past, we did not pay attention to these problems. The parties in the socialist countries have become state parties and monopolized power. Now we are beginning to understand that their role should be exclusively that of ideological and political bodies. We must make socialism better than capitalism both economically and politically. Socialism should be more productive and more democratic. And the situation in Europe and the world will depend largely on how quickly and confidently we move along this road.

When Mikhail Gorbachev visited Yugoslavia, the subject of Soviet perestroika figured constantly in the talks, because the Soviet Union was the first country to choose a socialist course. Now, once again, it is providing an impetus to world development. And an important factor in this is that the Soviet Union's authority today is the authority of its leader. Authority not only in the socialist community, but in the whole world. It is significant, for instance, that rank and file Americans are showing great interest in perestroika. But as the authority of socialism grows, so does its historic responsibility...

Facing the truth

Inder Kumar Gujral,
Indian public leader

Never since the days of Lenin – the Khrushchev destalinization era included – has the Soviet society undergone such far-reaching social, economic and political convulsions as at present. Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership introduced a refreshing note of change that it has zealously sustained. His main merit, as a leader, is that he does not content himself with mere issuance of fiats and orders for "glasnost" and "perestroika." He strives for real reforms and ensures their implementation. In the process he has unmasked individuals and groups who had acquired privileges and wealth totally out of proportion to their social contribution. Such elements had bent the dogma to suit their purposes. Stagnation and loss of momentum were inevitable. In the final analysis, the dynamism of society is in direct proportion to its capacity to face the truth and effect inner cleansing.

At the present time more and more of some of the major assumptions of the preceding leaderships are being questioned in the Soviet Union. New approaches to forms of ownership are being projected. The view that all forms of socialist ownership, and not only state ownership, should be developed is gaining the upper hand. The new leadership firmly believes that it is productivity that matters and therefore it blames those who denigrated cooperative property, the private plot, individual labour, the market and profit, etc., as survivals of capitalism. Now the question is posed this way: "If individual labour can be useful to society then why erect ideological and practical obstacles to its development?"

Many high priests of yesteryears could never imagine that Gorbachev could have the courage and vision to revise basic assumptions of their theoretical beliefs.

This new outlook is also related to diplomacy. The new foreign policy postulates are an integral part of the internal policy revisions. The present leadership has understood these linkages. It has advanced a "new philosophy of foreign policy" that facilitated the signing of the INF treaty and now pursues the cause of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Adding a new dimension to Soviet diplomacy, Soviet foreign policy has ceased to be a mechanical continuation of the old. In the late 1970s I was India's ambassador in Moscow for several years. So I have a long experience of the Soviet diplomatic bureaucracy and I can well imagine their discomfort when they heard Mikhail Gorbachev say that "continuity in foreign policy has nothing in common with the simple repetition of what has been done, especialy in tackling the problems that have piled up. What is wanted is a high degree of accuracy in assessing one's own possibilities, restraint and an eminently high sense of responsibility when decisions are made. What is wanted is firmness in upholding principles and postures, tactical flexibility and readiness for mutually acceptable compromise and an orientation on dialogue and mutual understanding rather than confrontation." This is a golden set of rules that every foreign office the world over should display on the desks of its diplomats.

The Marxian dogmatists had mechanically come to believe that the march forward to socialism the world over was in-

evitable and so they had to do precious little to improve conditions of life in the socialist countries; everything would come of itself.

Those like myself who have lived for a long time in the Soviet Union and travelled widely in your country did see some positive achievements. Although I must say that for me it was scant consolation to compare these modest achievements with the conditions of life in India, China or other developing countries.

Gorbachev has grasped the very essence of the problem when he says "...we are watched by both friends and foes. We are watched by the huge and heterogeneous world of the developing nations. It is looking for a choice, for its own road and what this choice is will depend to a large extent on socialism's successes, on the credibility of its answers to the challenges of time." To a friendly observer like myself in distant India this is the substance of the restructuring and new openness that Soviet society is aiming at.

Unless society and its rulers at various levels are able to recast themselves in a new mould and prove capable of responding to the concerns and protests of the population, all reform programmes are bound to be shortlived.

The friends and sympathizers of the Soviet Union are looking forward with interest to the forthcoming Party Conference. It means so much to us who are looking for a new hope that may offer social justice, democracy and peaceful coexistence in one package through peaceful means.

We have inherited one world

Admiral Sir James Eberle,
Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs

Practically everyone in the world welcomes the perestroika that has begun in the Soviet Union. First, because the Soviet Union is becoming a more open society and is beginning to rejoin – if one can put it that way – the rest of the world. Yet for a long time it was felt that your society had been torn away from the greater part of the world, especially the West and the capitalist countries. The Soviet Union was regarded as something completely different. It was very difficult to communicate with your representatives. They clearly did not want to discuss the issues that troubled us, although, of course, they spoke a lot about peace. Their views on the road to peace did not correspond to those that are now popular in the West.

Immense changes have now taken place. In all our discussions with Soviet representatives the questions that are brought up are those that confront the world and require a solution. I agree with Gorbachev that we have inherited one common world. And the questions you pose have become comprehensible to us in the West. As a result of the changes inside the Soviet Union, the West has changed its view of the Soviet Union. And I feel that that is very good.

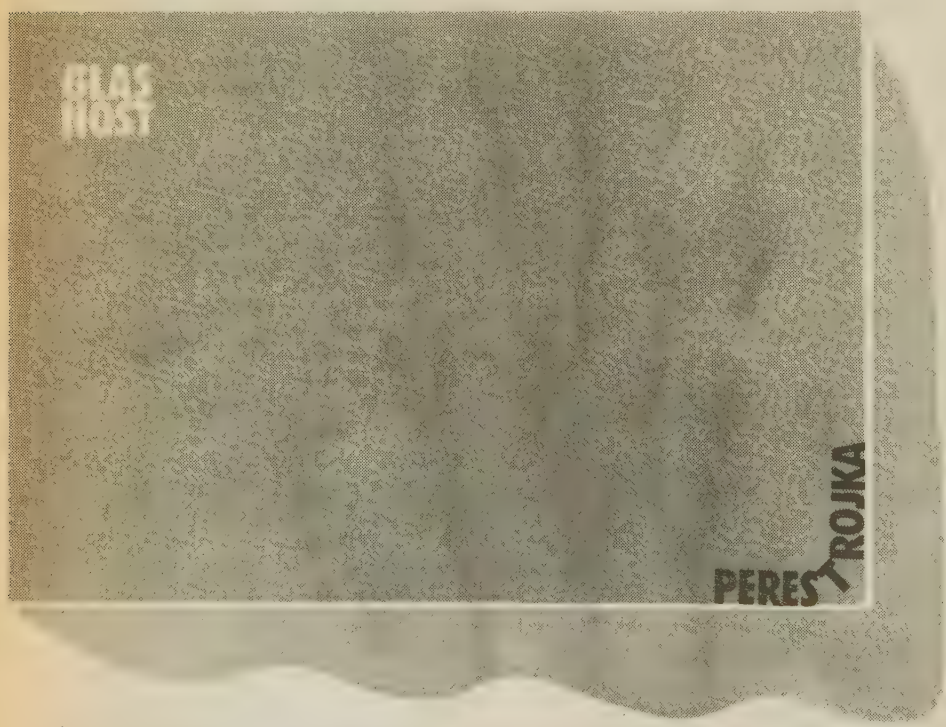
Secondly, the West has reassessed what we describe as the "Soviet military threat." It was believed that the Soviet Union sought the destruction of the Western system, that this aim is inherent in the basis of Marxism and socialism. That, of course, could not fail to worry the Western countries. And as a result, the conviction developed that the Soviet Union presented a military threat. Now this impression has changed. Not in respect of Soviet military might, which Western experts still believe has an immense offensive power. No. But in the process of talks we have reached a state of affairs where we can agree on a mutual reduction of armed forces, including those regarded by the other side as the most dangerous from the point of view of offensive operations.

As a result, today we view the Soviet Union as a society with which we can have not only normal social and political contacts, but also as a society which is less of a military threat. And that naturally has noticeably changed the entire nature of international relations.

Other important processes are taking place in tandem. This applies first and foremost to Western Europe, which by 1992 is to have a common domestic market as a step forward to a European Union. On the other hand, in many parts of the world a comparative decline in the strength of the American dollar is taking place. It no longer dominates the world economy as it did not so long ago. We have seen the establishment of Japan as one of the economically strongest countries in the world. China is gradually restoring its links with the rest of the world, both in the economic and political spheres. Changes are also taking place in Eastern Europe. As a result, it is becoming increasingly clear that Eastern Europe – to use Gorbachev's terminology – is part of our common European home. What shape should this house take? Who will inhabit it? And will the neighbours live each in his own tight compartment or will their doors be open to one another?

It should not be forgotten that for far too long the countries of Eastern Europe were regarded in the West as Soviet puppets, which was not only unjust, but also untrue. The example of Hungary, where serious reforms are being put through, bears this out. Moreover, the process of the restoration of the national identity of each of those countries has begun. What Churchill called "the iron curtain" has not been torn down, but it has at least become much less opaque. And that, in my opinion, is a very positive thing, since both in Europe and among the Soviet people, there exists a natural desire for contacts.

Taking all the above-mentioned together, it seems to me that it opens up to us a period of unsurpassed possibilities.



Poster by West German artist Schreiber

Concerning a sense of reality

Lev Bezymensky

A rather remarkable episode occurred at one of the news conferences held before the start of the 19th All-Union Communist Party Conference. One Western newsman asked the Soviet personalities on the floor about mistakes in Soviet foreign policy during the "period of stagnation." The replies that followed were exhaustive and fascinating. However, then another newsman present wondered what mistakes the West had been guilty of over that period.

The time of a one-way street in world politics has receded into oblivion. Should there be a need to analyze things from a critical angle, which is always rather painful, then both sides should do so. At any rate, Soviet politicians are demonstrating an at times unexpected audacity in this connection. But what about the West? Is it prepared to measure up equally as far as perestroika and glasnost are concerned? Though it is of course gratifying to see that these Russian terms have been internationalized without translation, it is too early for euphoria.

When I saw Chancellor Helmut Kohl on television in West Germany recently and heard him say: "The German question is open and remains open!", I thought at first of taking the advice of my young colleague, our magazine's Bonn correspondent, and looking for what is new in Federal Germany's attitude and paying no attention to the "traditional invocations." Indeed, of late it has seemed to me that Federal Germany's ruling CDU party has become aware of the need to revise its attitude to relations between the two Germanys and jettison the shopworn phraseology of "reunification." However, at the risk of being seen as an inveterate faultfinder, I nevertheless noted certain points which the Chancellor and other CDU functionaries trundled out recently and which, sad to say, impart something of a new dimension to the "traditional invocations."

Europe's points at issue

Let us see what Kohl's current idea implies. He believes the "German question" to be open not only for him, but also for the Soviet Union. "Today," he said at the CDU's Wiesbaden convention, "a tendency has emerged within the Soviet Union and in most Warsaw Treaty states, whose ultimate results we are still in no position to foresee. This is a process which cannot but bear upon Germany as well. There is not the slightest ground for maintaining that fate itself has finalized the present situation." This point was clarified and further developed by Alfred Dregger, Chairman of the CDU/CSU Bundestag faction. As he sees it, "Europe's fossilized postwar condition" with its "arbitrarily delineated boundaries in Germany" will be corrected in the upshot of perestroika in the U.S.S.R.

One might take issue with the Chancellor as to the question of "fate," inasmuch as right at this very moment we are noting the fortieth anniversary of the separate monetary reform that triggered off the "present situation," a reform instituted not by "fate" but by the Western powers along with Chancellor Adenauer. However, let bygones be bygones. Far more dangerous is that fundamental blunder, which the West could now commit in its assessment of the processes occurring in the U.S.S.R. and throughout the entire socialist community. Perestroika, after all, was in no sense conceived as an instrument to destabilize Europe. Quite the contrary!

I do not of course command enough authority to assure the CDU leaders that their hopes of perestroika serving as an instrument that will redefine Europe's boundaries are illusory. Yet even common sense could tell Dregger that he will not live to see today's peaceful Europe capitulate to those who, defeated in the war, yearn to redraw boundaries again.

Having said that, I was angry with myself. What, in the Europe of Helsinki, a Europe that is today expelling rockets, makes it expedient again speaking about boundaries? Let me toss the reproach into the court of those who, bereft of a sense of reality, seek to foist futile arguments and fictitious problems upon Europe. The impression is that for some CDU leaders the processes now taking place in the socialist countries serve merely as a pretext for dinning long superannuated formulas and homilies into the ears of their Eastern neighbours. Even the Chancellor has not managed to avoid that in respect of the Soviet Union. He has been still more energetic as regards the German Democratic Republic, employing the age-old technique of speaking for others and not for himself. But why? What reason does he have to do so? "We shall not let ourselves be deprived of anything that could bear upon the principles of our Constitution," the Chancellor has declared. Why, then, doesn't he display the same respect for the G.D.R.'s Constitution? Why doesn't he agree to its right "not to let" the G.D.R. "be deprived" of its social choice?

Though of course the Federal Republic is not living in "the world of yesterday," insofar as it is realized there – and let me quote the Chancellor once again – that "war and violence are no instrument of politics for us," to say such things today is, frankly speaking, definitely not enough. Today it is high time to proceed to a positive interpretation and give thought to what comprise the real instruments of politics in Europe at the close of the twentieth century.

There is certainly food for thought here. For instance, as concerns the effort to carry forward the success the INF treaty has attained, West Germany has contributed to that. So why not try to carry the success further? Why object to a nuclear-free Europe? "All who seek such elimination of nuclear weapons shore up the Soviet Union's dominant role in Europe," Helmut Kohl maintains. But if the Chancellor means conventional armaments, note that the U.S.S.R. has offered a new concept for the reduction of such armaments, which banishes all Western fears, including those of West Germany. However, neither NATO, nor West Germany are in any hurry to discuss this concept.

In short, the new political thinking still has many hurdles to overcome in the West, in this case, the F.R.G. However, that can be done. "Danger arises when the sense of reality is lost." How right! Helmut Kohl himself said that.

Again I seemed to have second thoughts. After all, Helmut Kohl is soon to pay Moscow an official visit, of which much is expected, in keeping with the great political potential of the F.R.G. West Germany can play a positive role in Europe's concerns. I think, though, that the level Soviet-West German relations have currently attained is on a high enough plateau for us to be able to candidly tell one another about what causes disagreement, as that will, in turn, pave the way towards agreement.

Democratic veil torn away

An abortive experiment in democracy: civilian president Leslie Manigat has been ousted less than six months after coming to power

Lt. Gen. Namphy, head of Haiti's armed forces, went on television on June 19, holding a submachine gun. He said he had dissolved National Assembly (parliament) and appointed a military cabinet.

Only a few months ago Namphy, then head of the interim National Government Council, helped Leslie Manigat to power by ordering the army to guarantee the holding of elections on January 17. There was a low turnout at the poll – from 5 per cent, according to opposition sources, to 35 per cent of eligible voters, according to official data. On February 7 the constitutional government, the first since the seizure of power by the Duvalier clan 30 years ago, took office. And now the general has again placed the nation under military rule.

Namphy accused the overthrown president of "having betrayed the Constitution," failing to mention that he himself had flouted it by occupying the presidential palace, arresting the head of state and deporting him.

The immediate reason for the putsch was the disagreement between Namphy and Manigat over some transfers in the army command. Perhaps there are some deep-seated reasons, for instance, mutually exclusive ideas on the development of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Nothing of the kind. As far as I know, nobody has so far been able to discern in their statements even a semblance of a social and economic programme.

Namphy, when he was head of the interim regime, did not concern himself with the economy, while Manigat merely promised to elaborate reforms that would lead the nation out of its economic and social impasse, but never put forward any reforms. As for Haiti's political development, there were even some common points in the positions of the two leaders.

Under the interim regime led by Namphy, a couple of particularly odious henchmen of Duvalier were brought to trial. Political exiles, including Communists, were allowed to return. And, lastly, it was Namphy who held elections, albeit a semblance of them.

Leslie Manigat, a 57-year-old professor of political science, emigrated from Haiti because of his disagreement with the policy of Duvalier senior. His latest political statements were assessed by Western observers as liberal. During his short-lived presidency, Manigat cut the salaries of top government officials and his own as president.

It will clearly take some time to understand what has happened in Haiti. Right on the heels of the events, a representative of the United Party of Haitian Communists described the motives for the coup as rather vague. At the time of writing this, none of the country's mass organizations has made a statement concerning the coup. News agencies report that situation in Haiti remains calm. The people seem to have reacted to the dramatic events in the capital with apathy and fear. They feel perplexed, though they understand that the latest events mean the struggle between ambitious leaders to gain power and engage in illegal trade operations, while talking about the welfare of the nation and the striving for democracy. This is how policy is made by rulers behind the backs of the people ruled by them. It reminds a power struggle for the sake of power.

While the upper echelons are engaged in the power struggle, the vast majority of Haitians drag out a miserable existence.

Photo by Evgeny Bai

Many things are obscure, indeed, as is evidenced by the contradictory reaction in the United States and, moreover, in one and the same department. The State Department has condemned the coup as a serious blow to hopes for democratization. At the same time, George Shultz has declared that the Haitian coup might be not a bad thing if it leads to the removal of Col. Jean-Claude Paul from his post. The political crisis began, in particular, over the fate of this commander of the country's principal military base. A Miami court has indicted him on cocaine-smuggling charges.

Incidentally, a commentator on the French television channel TF-1 expressed the opinion that the latest events in Haiti had been triggered off by the struggle over the drug trade. According to him, cocaine is smuggled from South America to Port-au-Prince (which is not, of course, the only transshipment point), and thence into the United States. The commentator believes that Manigat wanted to halt the trade in contraband by removing some of the army officers involved in the drug trade, but was overthrown.

The capitalist states admitted Haiti's constitutional regime to their "democratic family" and decided to help it, albeit cautiously. Manigat's civilian administration received a gift of three million dollars from France. Farm equipment worth four million dollars was handed over to it without compensation by Japan. Taiwan agreed to grant Haiti a four-million-dollar loan at low interest.

Expressing general disappointment at the latest events, the British newspaper The Guardian sadly commented a few days ago that democracy could not be established in Haiti even in the most wretched form.

When will a new coup attempt be undertaken? Is democratization in Haiti possible only from above? This seems to be so at present, for the progressive forces have been stifled by tyrannical rule for decades and, being disunited, they do not have sufficient experience of influencing people by political means.

Vladislav Chirkov

Stalemate at opening?

A new cabinet formed in Paris. Exit right. Enter left?

New Times was not far wrong in its prediction (No. 23) of the outcome of the French parliamentary election of June 12. Of the total of 577 seats, the polling gave the French Socialist Party and its allies 276, the Alliance for the Republic, the Union for French Democracy and independents, 271, the Communist Party, 27, and the National Front, 1.

While the makeup and programme of the new cabinet, headed by the Socialist Michel Rocard, are being finalized, it is in place to take a look at the principal elements of his policy, which are already clearly discernible. The most urgent tasks are to speed up the modernization and restructuring of industry; to unify ("harmonize" is the term used) social legislation with that of the EEC partners (not excluding cancellation of some of the "handouts" given by the Socialists to the poorer sections of the population); to change the tax system (for instance, to cut indirect taxation, which now is considerably higher than in other Common Market countries); and to reorganize higher and secondary education with a view to increasing the influx into industry of the highly-skilled personnel it so badly needs. The purpose is to bring the French economy to a level with the leading Western countries, to prepare it for the creation of the integrated market of the community projected for 1992 in which it will have to contend with still sharper competition from the foreign giants.

To resolve the problems facing the country, the President and the government will have to display truly Florentine political skill, ability to reconcile the irreconcilable. For example, it is proposed, firstly, without encroaching heavily on the interests of the big speculative moneybags (whose influence is as powerful as ever), to give more elbow room to the industrialists capable of ensuring an economic and technological spurt in the European and world race for leadership in which France, regrettably, is lagging behind more and more. Secondly, to see to it that a free hand for the captains of industry will not lead to a social explosion (the memory of the final months of Giscard d'Estaing's presidency is still fresh).

And danger signals are more than enough. It is not so long ago that disenchantment with left cabinets, the right-wing policy of tightening belts, and the conciliatory stance of the reformist trade unions engendered apathy among broad sections of the population. This is how sociologist Alain Touraine summed up the prevailing mood: "To hell with economic prognoses! Who needs debates about social reform! Give us soup kitchens and charity!" Now the wind has changed. The growing momentum of the strike movement has been a stern reminder of seemingly long-forgotten demands – for ending inroads on real wages, checking the rise in the cost of living and the growth of unemployment, and putting a stop to the winding-up of production in entire branches of industry and regions.

What makes things difficult for the Socialists is their failure to win an absolute majority in parliament. They won enough seats to form a stable government but not enough to embark on a radical reform programme as they tried to do in 1981. The ruling class sees this as a boon. It wants to be protected on the left from excessive pressures from "below" and at the same time to have guarantees that the previous course will on the whole continue (of which the formidable right opposition is an earnest).

The advent in the Hotel Matignon of a Socialist government is undoubtedly a step toward the realization of a long-cherished project: to build a new government machine after the model of the leading Western countries, where left- and right-centre coalitions take turns at the helm. Will such an engine help increase the speed of the French racing car?

Aware of the many obstacles lying ahead, the new leadership has opted for the tried and tested tactics of going slow. it believes that the constantly changing alignment of forces in the country and the situation in Western Europe as a whole will of themselves set the pace and determine the character of the reforms. It proposes to obtain the necessary consensus in parliament by measures to encourage the "market economy" – that idol worshipped in one way or another by all the bourgeois parties represented in the Palais Bourbon.

Nor are the moneylenders forgotten. For their benefit the last restrictions on money-market operations have been lifted (an additional reminder that the hearts of the French Socialists are on their left side but their pocketbooks are always on the right). However, fearing that Papa Gobseck might transfer his money abroad, where tax rates are more advantageous, the authorities are being cautious about their next step – the introduction within 25 months of full freedom for the movement of capital within the EEC framework.

There is another reason for apprehension. The big moneybags are seriously alarmed by rumours that the Hotel Matignon intends to restore the tax on large fortunes in order to provide the means to finance the so-called minimum income – a new form of benefit for certain categories of people. This would give an additional 2,000–3,000 francs a month to some 500,000 people – a reward for their support of the Socialist Party in the election. Will the measure materialize? Critics have already calculated that the projected taxation of the rich will not produce the required sum.

How is the rest to be obtained? By squeezing more out of the fat cats? This would cause the kind of wholesale flight of capital abroad through a host of legal and illegal channels which in the early 1980s bled the French economy to such an extent that the Socialists were obliged to revaluate the franc three times inside two years.

"We shall not repeat the old mistakes," the Socialist leaders vow. They will not be ashamed of being accused of a drift to the right. A relinquishing of socialist ideals? The cult of the market? "We have to be realists," the men at Socialist Party headquarters say, shrugging their shoulders. The more flexible the principles the more room there is for manoeuvre, the weekly L'Express, a conservative mouthpiece, hastens to counsel.

"Neither nationalization nor denationalization!" is the main slogan of the new leadership. What is behind it? The previous conservative government, headed by Jacques Chirac, leader of the Alliance for the Republic, handed over the leading state banks and enterprises to associations of the biggest industrial, financial and insurance companies, known as the "hard cores." These associations gained control of the stock that passed over into the private sector. A highly complex system of "cross-pollination," i.e., mutual participation in the capital of these companies, was created.

The main levers of control created by this mechanism fell into the hands of individuals and groups which were closely connected with the Alliance for the Republic and provided that party with a virtually inexhaustible source of funds to finance its election campaign. Their vast influence began to be compared with the power of

the boyars in Russia and the grandees in Spain. Nevertheless it was not enough to secure the right a victory at the polls. However, something else was revealed. Instead of modernizing production after the Japanese or the West German model, the "boyars" and "grandees" went in for machinations, a drive for "the fast dollar" in the hope of making Paris the new financial capital of the world. The drastic worsening of all economic indices aggravated by an unprecedented stock market crash – share prices dropped by one-third – at the end of last year showed how dangerous it is to sacrifice national interests to the interests of the usurious bourgeoisie.

The government of Michel Rocard has drawn the necessary conclusions from all this. "France must extricate itself from the grip of sclerosis and routine," the Prime Minister says. He is now busy searching for ways to encourage the reformers of production and to limit the power of the speculators. The first swallow was the recent announcement of the resignation of the president and executive director of the Paris stock exchange following exposures of dubious machinations. An attempt is being made to "split" the "hard core," which developed into a parallel power centre of the right used as a counterweight to government by the Socialists. The enterprises and insurance companies remaining in the state sector are to play the part of the "splitters." Exactly how it will work out and with what political consequences for the Socialist Party a possible "chain reaction" might be fraught is hard to say.

And so a new game has been started on the political chessboard, but the position of the figures is already suggestive of a stalemate. Neither of the socio-economic poles is strong enough to dictate its own rules of the game to the other. How will the struggle for power between the two factions of the French bourgeoisie proceed? Will it once again be possible to force the working people to pay for the losses incurred as a result of the shortsighted, egoistic policy pursued by those "at the top"?

A long and painful period of instability that could have serious economic consequences awaits France. In these circumstances Paris is again wondering whether there should not be a return to a stronger presidential regime such as that which existed in the first years of the Fifth Republic, when the powers of the National Assembly were drastically restricted and the rights of the head of state substantially broadened. But these are not the times of De Gaulle. The idea is not popular in France. As for its partners in the European Economic Community and the transnationals, they have already made it clear to Paris that they will not support such plans.

Lev Makarevich

ITALY

Italian Communist steps

Alessandro Natta: A message to comrades

Dear comrades, it is a great regret and sorrow that I shall not be able to take part in the deliberations of the forthcoming plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission. The Party certainly cannot postpone this event till I am well again which, I am sure, is excuse enough for my absence. To make things perfectly clear, however, I must say that even if not handicapped by the state of my health, I would have asked you to consider the question of replacing the Party Secretary anyway. I am doing just that in this message.

I think it is clear to all of you that at the coming Congress I intended to complete the task I have pursued over the past few years – that of forming a new group of leaders.

The recent political events connected with the disappointing and disturbing results of the elections to the local government bodies, as well as my personal problems, have led me to the conclusion that it would be correct and timely to apply ourselves to changing the leadership without delay. The Party is facing a difficult period of trial, and if it is to emerge victorious – which I believe possible – a bold and concerted effort must be made now, immediately, for the purpose of the further development of the new elements we have come up with, and for the sake of further political renewal and organizational restructuring. And in a few months it will be necessary to start immediate preparations for the 18th Congress. The Party cannot do without a definite and reliable leadership even over a short period. In the face of an ever more serious challenge, it is necessary to transfer executive responsibility without hesitation.

I hope you understand that my motives for taking this decision are the same as those from which I agreed, in 1984 and later, after the 17th Congress, to accept the post of Secretary – my sense of duty and my conviction that I act in the interests of our Party as a whole.

As soon as my health is back to normal, I shall naturally return to work and apply all my energies to it, as usual. For the moment, I ask that the Franciscan rule be applied to me in accordance with which the Father Superior becomes a common friar upon the completion of his term of office.

Achille Occhetto, 52, has been elected new General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party. A native of industrial Turin, he heads the largest Communist Party of the capitalist world, the party of Gramsci and Togliatti, the party of Longo, Berlinguer and Natta.

Even ill-wishers have been compelled to note the democracy and high political standards demonstrated by the Italian Communist Party in changing its leader.

Today the world's papers are vying with each other in trying to analyze the current situation in the ICP and bring out the main home-policy factors which have had their effect on the Party's position in Italy and been behind its successes and its setbacks.

In the opinion of experts, Italy has been developing under rather "strange" conditions in the eighties. In Italy, as distinct from practically all the other West European countries, neo-conservative tendencies have been growing against a background of apparent prosperity. Centrist, moderate and moderate-left-wing political forces have gained in following over these years.

At the same time, the scientific and technological revolution has caused serious changes in the economic mechanism of capitalism which in turn has changed the social composition

Party leader down

of society (which is true of both the gainfully employed population and the working class). These changes, too, have resulted in the development of centrist and moderate trends.

These complex socio-political processes, which leave certain specific features of Italian capitalism intact, have had an unfavourable effect on the position and influence of the Italian Communist Party. This was strikingly manifested by the 1987 parliamentary elections and by the May 1988 partial municipal elections in which the Communist vote constituted 26.6 per cent (3.3 per cent less than in 1983) and 21.9 per cent of the total, respectively.

It would be wrong to say that the Communist Party's retreat has been caused exclusively by the new socio-political situation in the country. The activity of the party itself, its errors and miscalculations, have also had a role to play in this. Achille Occhetto indicated as much in his interview to the newspaper L'Unita. The analysis he has made is of undoubted interest.

One reason, in particular, why the ICP's influence in the country has declined, Achille Occhetto stressed, is that it has failed to work out a timely policy taking the new character of the contradictions in modern society into account. The results of the 1987 and 1988 elections caused qualitative changes in the alignment of political forces in Italy and affected the standing of the Italian Communist Party throughout the country, from the North to the South.

Under the circumstances, Achille Occhetto said, the Communists' top priority was to create "a new Communist Party" capable of making dynamic progress in the complex and ramified network of left-wing forces. The most important problem to deal with, he stressed, was that of ensuring interconnection between the class role of the Communist Party and its national role on the threshold of the new millennium.

Achille Occhetto voiced his profound concern for the future of the ICP and his readiness to seek new "untrodden" paths.

The army of Italian Communists, 1.5-million strong, is now at a crossroads. Critical analysis is now being given not only to its leadership's practical actions over the past few years, but also to events of fifty years ago connected with the ICP's participation in the Comintern and its position on the various problems the international communist movement is faced with.

Such is the situation in which the new and vigorous leader of the Party, with his rich political experience and keen analytical mind, is to unite all the forces and trends inside the party, so as to bring mass character and dynamism back into its policy and revive the glorious traditions of the Italian working people's militant vanguard.

Leonid Popov

Achille Occhetto:

Towards new unity

In ascertaining the causes of the ICP's setback at the local government elections, we must bear it in mind that the renewal of the Party is taking place not in a vacuum but in a clash, a political struggle which involves those seeking to diminish, if not annihilate, the force and presence of the ICP in Italian society. We should not ignore this struggle and the attack being mounted on us. If we make a serious effort and are at one with each other on the crucial issues, we shall achieve results...

Discussions and quests are essential to the fulfilment of the task we have set ourselves. I must say in all frankness that the election of a new Secretary General goes only part of the way towards carrying out this task; we must compare notes and do critical research with the participation of the whole Party. This is a tall order, but we are not starting from scratch. Our heritage consists in the political and cultural innovations introduced by Alessandro Natta and manifestly approved at the Party's latest Congress in Florence. Today, however, we must move even further ahead...

It is not, we are convinced, a scattered and divided left, but a broad, pluralistic and, at the same time, united left that has a future... The very idea of socialism has undergone and is still undergoing profound changes. We all of us must reflect on this...

Reflections and exchanges of view in the Party should be the subjects of a research effort fundamental to the creation of a renovated Communist Party. A discussion such as this calls for lucid and pluralistic statement of positions and for the ability not to dramatize differences in views, and not to question the Party as a whole, its activity and the historical causes for its existence, for the mere reason that a discussion is under way and that different, sometimes conflicting solutions are suggested.

It is necessary to hold, on the eve of the next ICP Congress, a broad discussion on the renovation of the Party's policy, on a new line for the Italian Communists. This discussion is to produce new ideas and suggestions and strengthen the ICP's roots in Italian society. Effectively, it is a question of all of us engaging in a more thorough discussion of the role the Italian Communists – who make up a part of the European left – are to play in the Europe of détente and Gorbachev's perestroika, in a Europe called upon to play a politically decisive role in the Mediterranean...

The issue of the planned transfer of the American F-16 fighter-bombers from Spain to Italy raises the problem of national honour. Communists disagree with certain forces' interpretation of the role Italy should play in NATO. There is no legal provision for Italy accepting anything that Spain, Portugal, Greece and other NATO countries do not want. Italy is no slop pail for other countries' refuse...

The same old story

Sergei Golyakov

The other day, authoritative American psychologists provided scientific confirmation of a phenomenon which is now one of the most talked about subjects in the political columns. The Soviet-American summit in Moscow had an envigorating psychological effect on the minds of Americans at large. The Americans' two main worries – a nuclear holocaust and "those unpredictable Russians" – have markedly diminished.

So far, so good. But listen to this: from now on it will be very difficult to dehumanize Soviet people, who have projected a fresh and vivid image of themselves, a Stanford University expert warns.

What's the big idea? Why does the scientist complain about the difficulties of dehumanization? Isn't it about time this practice with regard to the Russians was abandoned – as all 285 million Soviet citizens are, by force of inertia, referred to in the West? Unfortunately, it looks as if the Stanford psychologist knows what he is talking about. When the Americans – and not just them, for that matter – begin to show keen curiosity about what's happening inside the Soviet Union and what the Soviet Union is doing in the international arena, the adherents of power politics feel the ground slipping from under their feet. The first reaction of the bellicose mentality is to bang the opening door shut, to save and revamp the fading "enemy image."

Background of a provocation

The latest case in point is the decision by the Canadian authorities to declare personae non gratae a number of Soviet officials who have been working in Ottawa and Montreal. A psychiatrist would describe this as a relapse into the old anti-Soviet mental derangement known as spy mania, cases of which have been repeatedly registered in certain Western capitals, always in situations where they sought to build up tension, escalate confrontation, and worsen the international climate. Now, too, the Canadian authorities' action has been traditionally timed to coincide with the emergence of prospects of an improvement in East-West relations, Soviet-American and Soviet-Canadian relations included. It has been officially announced in Moscow that those whom the prospect does not suit are trying to frustrate the process and interfere with it in every way. The Canadian security service has been a mere tool in these forces' hands.

I don't think it takes special shrewdness to understand why Canada has been chosen this time as the stage on which to play the anti-Soviet farce. This can hardly be regarded as part of the domestic political struggle or a trick resorted to by certain circles in Canada with a view to spoiling Soviet-Canadian relations in their own selfish interests. There is no ignoring the following circumstance. The leaders of the Seven met in conference in Toronto last week. For a while the topicality of the problems under discussion there drew the world's close attention to the Toronto Convention Centre. More than 3,000 journalists covered the event on the spot. Canada had never attracted such a host of sensation-seeking reporters before. Nothing sensational happened at the meeting, however. The much-desired thunder struck on the periphery. Owing to the presence of so many members of the writing fraternity, a run-of-the-mill anti-Soviet provocation had incredible repercussions. The tactical considerations involved may vary with the circumstances, but the political background to such provocations remains unchanged. As ever, doubts are cast, above all, on the sincerity of the Soviet Union's intentions, on our home and foreign policy priorities, and the U.S.S.R.'s ability to solve its problems on its own, without recourse to Western technology. The same old story used for want of something better. Only this time Soviet officials are accused of having encroached upon Canadian technological secrets.

The world has already heard such stories no end of times. Recall, for instance, the hue and cry about the Soviets stealing Shuttle secrets in America and Ariane missile secrets in France; or the strikingly similar legends about Russian seductresses who lured into their toils not only a French rocketeer, but also a whole company of American Marine guards at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. In the end, all these tales burst like soap bubbles. The termination of legal proceedings against the Soviet citizen Lyudmila Varigina (Verdier) "for lack of corpus delicti" is the best proof of the fact that all such "cases" have just been a lot of "hot air."

It has been announced in Moscow that the charges proferred against the Soviet officials in Canada are totally ungrounded and far-fetched. The stage managers of anti-Soviet provocations are obviously going round in circles, and doing their own country's reputation more harm than good.

I do not know who the Canadian diplomats in Moscow, now packing their bags, are swearing at. Maybe they put all the blame on us. Speaking in all fairness, however, they ought to bear a grudge against those in their own camp who simply cannot do without the "enemy image." We in the Soviet Union have already discarded this image. We don't need it either for our domestic needs, or in our foreign policy interests. Why don't certain Western politicians follow suit? They would make their lives a lot easier that way.

Conversion. Is it possible?

New Times continues its discussion on the problems of switching military production to civilian purposes*

MALCOLM CHALMERS *of the University of Bradford, Britain, discusses the adverse effect of the arms race on the British economy and the economic and political possibilities of reducing the arms burden.*

The burden of economic decline

After the second world war, successive British governments maintained defence spending at a level disproportionate to the country's economic strength. At the same time, none of the defeated countries – Germany, Japan or Italy – went nuclear, and their conventional armed forces were limited to their needs for defence. Therefore, even in the past few years they have spent much less on defence than the main victors in the war: the two superpowers and Great Britain. Today in Japan and West Germany 2 and 9 per cent respectively of public spending goes on military research, as against 55 per cent in Britain and over 60 per cent in the United States.

Though Britain is by no means the richest nation in Western Europe at present, it is still along with the Federal Republic of Germany and France, one of the "big three" in military terms. At the same time, the military budget of Italy, the fourth West European power, which has surpassed Britain in the volume of its gross domestic product, comes to only 40 per cent of Britain's military spending. Such is the ratio of priorities between the economic development and military commitments of the two countries.

There is considerable evidence that Britain's high level of military spending has been a major factor in the country's rapid relative economic decline since the 1950s. If the British government is seriously committed to tackling the country's economic decline, it cannot afford to ignore the high proportion of industrial and scientific resources used for military purposes. Achieving international competitiveness in the civilian sectors likely to grow fastest in the near future – notably in the sphere of information technology – will be considerably more difficult if there is not a large reduction in the military's demands on resources.

To carry out the conversion of a large part of the arms industry to civil production, the government will have to overcome strong resistance, not only from the military, but also from the companies and workers involved. An important role in this process could be played by alternative production plans drawn up by workers at arms factories. A series of such plans have already shown the potential for using existing skills to make a range of socially useful products in areas as diverse as public transport and marine technology. Government financing of such projects, even if providing only a fraction of the amount currently spent on military research and development, could act as a catalyst in turning these ideas into productive new technologies.

A policy of steadily reducing arms spending, and diverting resources into high technology civilian industry, could have substantial benefits for Britain's economy. The government should grasp the opportunity to pursue such a policy afforded by the current relaxation in East-West tension. Both the major opposition parties in Britain appear to accept the need to reduce dependence on nuclear weapons. The Labour Party wants Britain to adopt an entirely non-nuclear defence policy. The conclusion of the INF treaty has brought the idea of a nuclear-free Europe to the forefront of public discussion.

Non-nuclear defence does not seek simply to replace nuclear weapons with conventional weapons of equal destructive power. Rather the aim of non-nuclear defence proposals is to give NATO the ability to defend itself against conventional attack without resorting to the use of nuclear weapons. Whether such a policy requires higher defence spending by Britain, or by other NATO members, depends both on one's view of the current balance of conventional forces in Europe, and on how that balance is thought likely to change in the near future.

The economic pressures leading Britain to reduce its high level of defence spending are also being felt by both the United States and the Soviet Union. If this is translated into real cuts in the military budgets of the two superpowers, the reductions in Britain's own defence burden could be even greater. Non-nuclear defence and converstion could complement each other, both contributing to the process of reducing tension that is so necessary if Europe is to live in peace.

PYOTR LITAVRIN, *a Soviet expert, warns against taking a simplified approach to conversion.*

Examine the issue in its entirety

Discussions on the problem of conversion often reflect the polarization of those who take part in them. The advocates of a continuing arms race are trying to prove that conversion will entail grave economic and social con-

*For previous contributions on the subject see No.39 for 1987 and No.1 for this year.

sequences, unemployment, and a slowing down of scientific and technological progress. This argument is not sufficiently well founded. The numerous studies carried out both East and West, as well as U.N.-sponsored research show that, despite the difficulties, the conversion of the munitions industry to civilian production is entirely feasible and can in effect be started today. The postwar experience of the Soviet Union, the United States and other countries also proves that conversion is possible.

Others assert that conversion will not meet with great difficulties, especially in the socialist countries, and if obstacles arise, they will most likely be connected with the demilitarization of the economy. In his contribution to the discussion published in issue No. 39/87, Nikolai Karpukhin argues that conversion is rather a political and organizational problem which can to all intents and purposes be solved in the same way as the problem of switching over to a new mass-scale technology. I think this a very simplistic approach to the matter.

As distinct from the early postwar years, the munitions industry has today achieved a high degree of specialization. This is particularly true of the aerospace and radio electronic industries and the manufacture of a number of technologies and types of electronic computer and armoured equipment. It is difficult to regear these highly militarized industries to the production of socially useful goods. Considerable time and effort will therefore be needed to convert them to civil purposes.

The consumption of raw materials per unit of output is bigger in civilian production than in the munitions industry. However, the munitions industry requires highly specialized types of raw material; for instance, such rare and expensive metals and components as titanium, niobium, carbon, boron and fiber glass are used in the manufacture of B-1B and Stealth bombers. The specific character of military technologies using special raw materials and semi-finished items also complicates the transfer of plants to production for civilian needs.

It should be noted at the same time that a high proportion of the scientific achievements applied in the munitions industry can be used as dual-purpose technology. This is, for instance, the aim of the West European programme Eureka, which envisages the use of research findings both for military and civilian purposes. American experts have estimated that if all the funds spent on scientific, research and development work in the military field over the period 1962-82 were used for research in the U.S. civilian industries, these would then attain a technical level expected to have been achieved only by the year 2000. The conversion of scientific, research and development work to civilian needs would reduce its secrecy, make scientific achievements more accessible, and lead to a broader international exchange of licences and know-how.

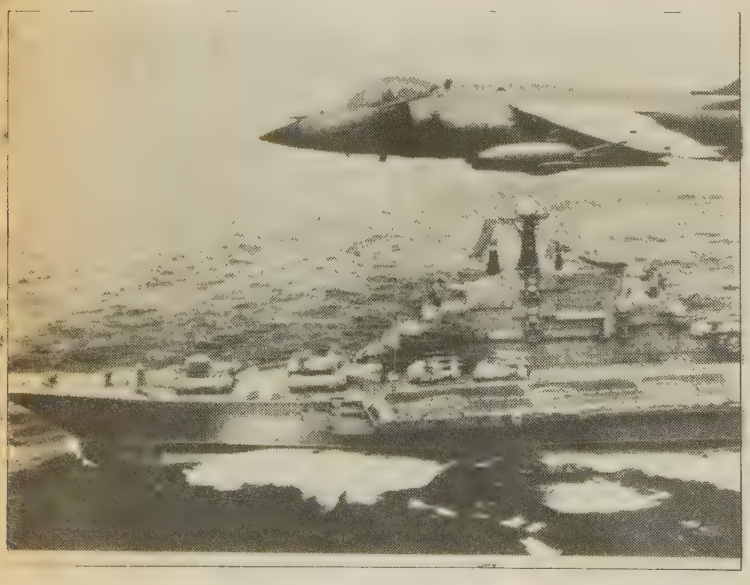
In some branches of military production conversion can be effected without great difficulty. It is known that Boeing manufactured planes of the 707 model both for civilian and military purposes (the KC-135 refueller). In the late 1970s the Boeing plant assembling combat helicopters was converted to the production of streetcars and subway trains. Calculations by Labour Party experts in Britain show that civilian planes and turbines could be manufactured instead of multi-purpose Tornado aircraft, and merchant ships and equipment for oilfields instead of anti-submarine cruisers. Many plants in the Soviet defence industry have acquired experience in manufacturing civilian products.

Also worthy of note is the difference between conversion in the East and the West. The socialist countries have a real economic interest in genuine disarmament and the conversion of their defence industries. They have no social strata or professional groups that profit from the arms race. Military production in the Soviet Union can be switched to civilian production in a planned way both on a wide scale and in individual plants and industries. This will naturally involve complex problems such as whether this or that plant is fit for the manufacture of civilian goods, and the employment of servicemen, engineers and technicians in the defence industry.

Constantly stressing that in a planned economy conversion will not create problems is wishful thinking. Moreover, this statement could play into the hands of those Western politicians who oppose conversion by saying that it is only advantageous to socialist countries. The point is that even the dismantling and scrapping of military equipment will immediately entail considerable expenditure.

In the final analysis, conversion depends on the solution of disarmament and security problems, on radical measures that would question the expediency of preserving the munitions industry from the political, defence and economic points of view. This is often used in the West as a pretext for saying that the time has not yet come for serious talk of conversion. The leaders of major capitalist countries, especially the United States, Britain, France and West Germany, make conversion dependent on global security and the settlement of regional conflicts and crises, that is, on eliminating the causes of the arms race.

Of course, a healthier international climate would make conversion a practicable scheme. It would be unwise, however, to give up the consideration of this problem only because it cannot be solved immediately. For success in tackling the conversion problem and the effectiveness of the struggle against the arms race largely depend on the ability of experts to prove convincingly that arms buildup will entail disastrous consequences and that conversion will have a beneficial effect on the economy, the social sphere and international relations. But to achieve this the conversion problem should be examined in its entirety today. ■



A scene common in the Atlantic: a British missile carrier "escorting" a Soviet warship. Such "Atlantic rendezvous" could stop if British aircraft builders changed over to civil planes, and Soviet shipbuilders – to sea liners.

Photo from Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

General Noriega and "ghost hunters"

The Panamanians have incurred Washington's anger because they value freedom more than the dollar

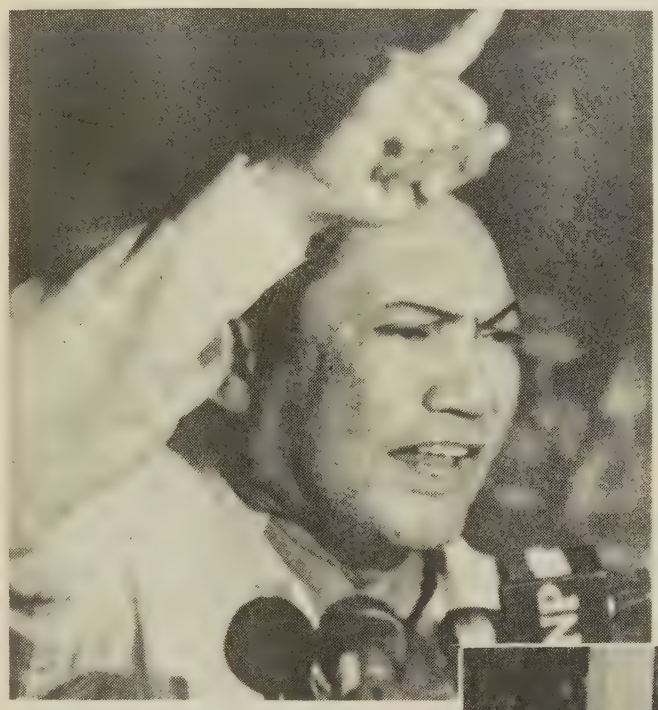
The White House is demanding the resignation of the Commander of the National Defence Forces General Manuel Antonio Noriega and the Republic's President, Manuel Solis Palma. Washington has sanctioned an econornic blockade of Panama, is organizing and financing anti-government campaigns, and recruiting groups of merchants, financiers, doctors and lawyers. U.S. Air Force jets overfly the area, terrorizing the civilian population. Reinforcements belonging to different arms are being sent into the canal zone.

If one assumes that Washington is genuinely interested in protecting democratic rights and liberating Latin American peoples from military dictatorships, one cannot help but ask if the same policy applies to the regimes of Pinochet in Chile and Stroessner in Paraguay. How do the U.S. leaders account for the fact that the people of Panama, far from contemplating a revolt against the regime, are on the contrary, bracing themselves to withstand the misery caused by the U.S. blockade? We see various political parties and trade unions rallying around the government and the armed forces.

Second religion

In the minds of many people, a typical Panamanian is a boisterous, carefree person incapable of making great sacrifices, relying on a stroke of luck, a person whose only serious interest is in carnivals, lotteries, fairs and auctions. The only exception are the forever grumbling members of left-wing parties.

The ruling class sought to dupe the Panamanian people. It tried to encourage a light-hearted, "carnival-like" perception of the world.



Free Panama is the watchword of General Noriega and the majority of the Panamanian people

But this was not how the people's self-awareness has developed. Beginning from the uprising of the Indians and blacks against the Spanish colonialists, its dominant feature has been the quest for freedom. As General Omar Torrijos said, national liberation was "a second religion" that united all Panamanians.

The official proclamation of the republic in November 1903 failed to resolve the contradiction between the developing Panamanian state and the expansionist designs of the United States. The contradiction acquired a sharper edge when the comprador bourgeoisie and the landowners signed a treaty on the Panama Canal in exchange for U.S. guarantees of the republic's integrity.

Panama quickly became a protectorate depending on the canal zone economically, politically and culturally. The creation of a national university was delayed twice (in 1913 and 1923) under U.S. pressure, and in 1915 the authorities in the zone even confiscated rifles from the Panamanian police.

The struggle launched in 1925 by the workers and the petty bourgeoisie against exploitation by the oligarchy and its constant concessions to imperialism was joined by the Communist Party in 1930, the Socialist Party in 1931 and unions of students and peasants, the Youth Front, and the teachers' and lawyers' trade unions in the forties. Through concerted effort, the democrats put an end to the dictatorship imposed by Washington at the height of World War II. The constitution was amended and progressive social legislation passed. On December 12, 1947 the country rejected the draft treaty which would es-

tablish, in addition to the canal zone, 114 enclaves for U.S. bases under the pretext that war was inevitable because of "Soviet expansionism."

The United States created, trained and armed the Panamanian National Guard. Initially, they were used to brutally suppress the popular movement. From 1958 the struggle for the return of the canal zone began to mount, reaching its peak after the massacre staged by U.S. troops in January 1964.

That struggle shook the political and social foundations of the rule of the oligarchy, and undermined the treaty of 1903 on which the United States had relied to maintain the colonial order. New sentiments were spreading among the National Guard officers. General Torrijos wrote in his book "I Am a Soldier of Latin America": "Gradually, step by step, from cause to effect, some sooner and others later, we all came to the conviction that when the people becomes resolved to seek liberation as a means to put an end to its misery, no force in the world can stop it... We realized that we were not a national army, but part of the occupation forces obeying a ruling class totally incapable of any change."

Alliance of the people and the army

Aided by the commander of the military district Manuel Antonio Noriega, Torrijos defeated the troops which had tried to overthrow him and were guided by the CIA and supported by the oligarchy. On December 16, 1969, he proclaimed that on that day an alliance of the people and the government had been born, and unity between the nation and the armed forces had emerged. National liberation was proclaimed state doctrine. The people was to play the key role in the projected changes.

This marked the start of an arduous process: the people abandoned their traditional anti-militaristic attitude and the military felt that they had become, as Torrijos put it, "the people in uniform." Under a new law, the land and buildings returned to Panama by the Americans should, if possible, be collectively used. Foreign policy became less dependent on Washington. Having espoused non-alignment, Panama established diplomatic relations with some socialist countries and strengthened its solidarity with the peoples of the Third World and with national liberation movements. The process was opposed by reactionaries in the U.S. and the local comprador bourgeoisie, which was lining its pockets by way of lucrative deals with international financial capital.

After the mysterious death of Torrijos, some officers, led by General Paredes and Colonel Diaz, did everything to turn back the historical clock. They tried to separate the armed forces from the people, oust Torrijos' supporters from the leadership of the Revolutionary Democratic Party, pushing it into the arms of the bourgeois parties within the National Democratic Union. However, during the presidential election, General Noriega deprived Paredes of the backing of the armed forces.

The reactionaries pinned their hopes on the National Democratic Union which won the election. Three of its leaders – Nicolas Ardito Barletta, Eric Arturo Delvalle and Roderick Esquivel – had close ties with Washington, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

They intended to abide by the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to put down the popular movement, depoliticize the armed forces, for which purpose it was necessary to remove all the officers who supported Torrijos, notably General Noriega, change the foreign policy stance with regard to Nicaragua and Cuba in accordance w ith Washington's wishes; and sign a new treaty that would ensure U.S. control over the canal zone and make it possible to set up military bases for the Southern Command and the newly-created U.S. 6th Army intended to ensure American dominance in the region.

Now that the hopes for the triumvirate have fallen through, Washington, allied with international and internal financial circles, has officially demanded the replacement of the Panamanian government. This is an unprecedented move. I am sure that the White House and the reactionaries have committed a grave error and become victims of self-delusion.

They blindly believed in the stereotyped image of a carefree and irresponsible people incapable of sacrifice. For the past eight years, the American mass media have been drumming it into the heads of the Panamanians that it was the dollar, and not independence that brought prosperity. Washington believed that in the face of economic blockade and occupation, the people would revolt and give away the heads of General Noriega, the officers who followed Torrijos, and political, public and trade union leaders. Washington believes that the Torrijos doctrine is dead, and that everything in Panama has its price, that reputations are bought and sold. The White House expected General Noriega to yield to blackmail and abandon plans to set up defence forces to replace the American troops in the canal zone on December 31, 1999.

Washington seems to have forgotten that there are some educated people among the officers. One of them is Major Hassan, who wrote the history of the country's armed forces blaming the U.S. for the dissolution of the national army in 1904. Most of the officers come from ordinary backgrounds. There is not a single representative of the bourgeoisie among them, and they identify themselves with their people.

As a provincial governor, I worked with Torrijos. This experience has helped me understand the military. Since then, I have followed the career of every officer as a historian and Communist revolutionary. I can attest that there have been few deserters from the ranks of the champions of absolute self-determination.

I know General Noriega. He is a true son of the people. As for his profits, which have been the subject of rumours and speculation, they have the same source as the profits of most entrepreneurs who use the laws of capitalism to make a fortune. All the allegations by American propaganda are just "ghost hunting."

Only those who perceive history as dead texts can wish President Manuel Solis Palma to hand General Noriega over, agree to the existence of the Southern Command and allow foreign military bases to remain on Panamanian territory after the year 2000. Apparently, they are unaware that Solis Palma was one of the leaders of the popular movement which in 1947 led to the dismantling of the military bases the U.S. had deployed during World War II.

The optimistic, peace-loving and industrious people of my country are exhibiting an inflexible will. They do not want their liberation to be delayed. They demand that the Torrijos-Carter treaty be implemented and that on December 31, 1999 the canal should pass under state control and the last occupying troops leave the country.

Ornel Urriola,
Panamanian journalist

Photos by AP-TASS and by courtesy of Cambio 16 magazine

The professor's "suggestion"

Leading Western countries are suddenly, and apparently, at first glance, without rhyme or reason, displaying heightened interest in the armed nationalist groupings operating in Burma, although they have been active there now for some forty years. However, closer scrutiny reveals a certain pattern behind this.

In late May BBC television showed a documentary called "The Unknown War" about the Burmese separatist national union Karens. To make the film, British cameramen illegally crossed from neighbouring Thailand into the Karens nationalist zone of operation. However, both the background to the issue and the current situation are presented in such a distorted and tendentious way that leading British Orientalist Professor R. Taylor termed it a fabrication, put together with the purpose of boosting the rebels.

The current tendency of many BBC and other Western broadcasts, beamed to Southeast Asia among other places, is similar. These broadcasts gave wide coverage to the recent visit by Bran Sen, "a representative of the Burmese rebel movement," to the U.K., West Germany, Japan and South Korea, where he met representatives of nongovernment organizations, the mass media and business circles. His intensive activities were again exploited in the interests of anti-Burmese propaganda. Bran Sen not only sought to acquire "moral support for the rebels," but also tried to negotiate military political assistance, which until recently the Burmese nationalists had failed to do.

The idea of foreign interference in Burma's "insurgency problem" is finding a positive response in certain Western circles – as was pointedly indicated by the contribution of political science Professor Joseph Silverstein of Rutgers University, New Jersey, again in late May, to the influential Hongkong weekly The Far Eastern Economic Review. In his article he says outright that the governments of the U.S. and other countries, more specifically the ASEAN nations, should deal with the "Burmese conflict," adding that a solution could probably be found via foreign aid. I see his prupose as being the same as that of the makers of "The Unknown War," and generally of the entire spectrum of the anti-Burmese campaign, i.e., to present a distorted picture of the situation. They think that little is known either about the country or the substance of its far from ordinary problems.

Burma has some hundred ethnic units whose levels of socio-economic development vary. As has been the case with other multinational states, relationships between these ethnic groups are by no means simple. There have been periods of outright confrontation and conflict, but on the whole the awareness has gradually prevailed that these ethnic units share a common historical destiny and would separately be unable to attain their individual national aspirations.

However, after Burma proclaimed independence in 1948, some nationalist groupings put forward secessionist slogans and took to armed struggle against the government. In recent years these breakaway groupings have largely lost their "political tinge" and gone "commercial." From the fringe areas they control they ship abroad silver, semi-precious stones, teak and antiques. Another bonanza is their drug trafficking in the notorious Golden Triangle, where Burma borders on Thailand and Laos. The insurgents also plunder and terrorize the local population, whose freedom they supposedly advocate.

For a long time the anti-government groupings have controlled only a few barely accessible mountainous and for the most part border areas. Virtually unable openly to engage the Burmese army, they stage guerrilla raids on government institutions and sabotage economic installations.

The "declining insurgency" is not due to the government's military action alone. Having declared political equality for all its races, the country is trying gradually to bridge their different levels of socio-economic development. The academy for the development of national minorities set up in Burma some 20 years ago trains schoolteachers and "social organizers" for outlying regions where more health and educational centres are opened and production facilities promoted than elsewhere, not infrequently to a highly sophisticated technical level.

Yet despite tangible progress, the national question in Burma, the problem of inter-nation relationships remains tangled, inasmuch as its solution calls for considerable material outlays as well as political resolve. Meanwhile, the country is having a very hard time of it, as many vital industries are either nonexistent or are in an embryonic state.

It stands to reason that the economic hardships are affecting day-to-day life. In my five years as TASS correspondent in Burma, I have often encountered in various parts of the country people inclined to ascribe privations and problems to "those Karens," or "those Shans," or "those Burmans." These feelings nourish the excesses between the ethnic units. On the other hand, sensible people realize that basic issues can only be resolved by working together and that "separatist" progress and prosperity for the Shans, the Chins or the Mons is an illusion.

So who are Silverstein and ilk, who are fomenting the anti-Burmese campaign, worried about? Surely not the Kachins, the Karens, the Arakans or other national minorities. Rather, this is outright blackmail and intimidation of Burma for consistently conducting an independent foreign policy and not kowtowing to anyone despite its very real financial difficulties.

Evgeny Shevelyov

Dear reader,

Our magazine is going to gain in bulk shortly: it will offer you 48 pages to read instead of 32 today.

This will enable us to give you more information on perestroika, the process of democratization in the Soviet Union, and to provide a wider and deeper coverage of world affairs.

Please make sure that your subscription does not expire in 1988. We'll be happy to see you among our regular subscribers in the coming year, too.

Please do us a favour and show a copy of our magazine to your colleagues, friends and acquaintances. They might get interested and take out subscriptions which are readily available from any V/O Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga's dealer in your country.

The Editors

OPINION POLL

Perestroika in my life

"What event in your life is connected with perestroika?"

On the eve of the 19th Party Conference New Times put this question to people in various age-groups and occupations.

Genrikh Novozhilov,
chief designer, delegate to the Party Conference

Shortly before the conference, our plant completed the assembly of a pilot model of a new jumbo, IL-96, intended to replace the IL-62M jet on long routes. The new 300-seat jet can make a nonstop 9,000-kilometre flight at a speed of up to 900 km/h. Its design incorporates the latest in scientific and technical achievements. The engines installed in the IL-96 can also be used for the TU-204 airliner that is now being developed. Moreover, the fuel consumption of the four-engine IL-96 is only two thirds of that of the IL-86 and half that of the IL-62M.

The IL-96 jumbo is fitted with new electronic and other instruments. Multicolour displays will help pilots handle the plane. A large part of the equipment was supplied by the Voronezh aircraft amalgamation. Advanced methods were used in the organization of labour, with over half the design plans and specifications prepared by contract teams. Work is paid according to the end result. This impels personnel to increase productivity and carry out assignments more rapidly. As a result, their wages increase as well.

Our designers have drawn up a programme for further modernization of the IL-96, to extend its nonstop flight distance to 12,000 km and increase its seating capacity. I am sure that the jet will be just as good as the Western models to be commissioned in the 1990s.

There are many problems, of course. For instance, the schedules for the delivery of finished items are not observed. There are still many difficulties in the coordination of various documents.

Starting with 1989, our experimental-design office will go self-supporting. We are already devising a new form of labour organization. Standards are being finalized and links between divisions and suppliers revised. The responsibility of all the personnel involved in the IL-96 programme is to be enhanced considerably.

Gavriil Popov,
D.Sc. (Econ.)

Not long ago I talked with two economic executives who had applied for professional advice. One of them spoke critically of the present economic situation, while the other merely expressed the wish to improve it. What they told me, in separate conversations, can be summed up as follows: "You are only criticizing government bodies, whereas we are anxious to speed up perestroika. But we do not know what to do, and you have not proposed anything concrete."

In these conversations characteristic of the present stage of perestroika I see first of all the fact that many executives do not know what to do. No less characteristic is the initial "platform": I am entitled to direct, and your duty is to provide ideas for me. This platform expressed the characteristically feudal confidence of some people in their inherent right to continue as managers irrespective of whether they have the expertise and ability to tackle new tasks.

The bitter experience of several decades has convinced me that attempts to give advice, write reports and draw up resolutions serve no purpose, because the present apparatus staffed to outdated criteria of the stagnation period is obviously unable to put perestroika into effect. It is clear to me that only replacing the present apparatus with a new one can create a situation in which I shall find it useful to give advice as an academic and an economist.

Vadim Dudarenko,
head of department, Sverdlovsk regional committee of the Young Communist League

In February of this year about ten thousand people gathered in the square near the YCL city committee building in Nizhny Tagil. Some of them addressed the rally and put forward demands. One of the posters said: "What have you done to prevent smog?" An explosion, an awakening after long dormancy, had taken place in the public consciousness.

Reports on the ecological situation in Nizhny Tagil began to appear in newspapers in the second half of last year. Earlier, there had been practically no information of this kind. Yet the situation was alarming. The atmosphere was heavily polluted with harmful substances – one and a half tons per capita annually.

The newspaper Tagilsky Rabochy (Tagil Worker) reproached the Young Communist League with apathy and lack of initiative. This stirred us to action, culminating in the February rally sponsored by the YCL city committee. As a result, one of the coke-oven batteries was shut down. But the problem was not solved, and it would be naive to expect results in the near future, because the difficulties had been accumulating for years. The main thing is that people rose in protest. They were tired of keeping silent.

The city fathers have understood that no decision on the ecological situation in Nizhny Tagil can now be adopted in secret, without consulting the people. A conference broadcast over the radio was held on June 4, and another public rally took place on the next day.

The most important thing is that people's psychology has changed, and they have become socially active. Of

course, this is only the beginning, because there are still more than enough problems. At the height of these events, having till then been first secretary of the Nizhny Tagil YCL city committee, I was transferred to work on the Sverdlovsk regional committee of the YCL, though I felt I was urgently needed in Nizhny Tagil. Of course, I maintain ties with the city and help my former colleagues. Incidentally, I was asked by the YCL regional committee to do so. But was my transfer to Sverdlovsk accidental? I can only guess.

Nikolai Chikirev,
director-general of the Sergo Orjonikidze machine tool plant, delegate to the Party Conference

The introduction of management accounting and state quality control is the main result of perestroika at our plant. This is so because quality is now becoming a top priority. We have openly admitted our shortcomings. Our machine building does not measure up to international standards and its products are not competitive on the world market. Practical steps are being taken to overcome these shortcomings.

To a certain extent, state quality control was an eye opener for us. We did not know some of the requirements and state standards, of which there is a thick file. They simply did not reach us. The situation is changing now. We have to put things right as we go along, all along the line, every day. This is not easy. But I can say that there have been no conflicts at the plant. The workers have understood the pressing need for changes. They have realized the vital need to make our engineering products highly competitive.

Since the end of last year, when state quality control was introduced, the quality of our flow lines has increased sharply. We are selling our products to the Federal Republic of Germany and other countries. Of course there are still a lot of difficulties. The electronics industry, on which we heavily depend, is not up to the mark. For instance, we do not have enough of the monitoring and measuring devices needed to determine the quality of transfer machines more accurately.

In short, today we are not just facing reality and recognizing our shortcomings, but are also doing a great deal to solve a very important economic problem, namely, overcoming all the failings and attaining high international standards.

Olzhas Suleimenov,
poet, delegate to the Party Conference

I could recall many things, each one of which symbolizes perestroika, but my memory immediately prompts alternative events. Some of them cause euphoria and others depression. Their comparison leads us to the main conclusion: our society is slowly but surely advancing along the path it has chosen. We would like it to move faster. However, the forced acceleration of social processes for the sake of ensuring more rapid economic growth proved disastrous in the past. A high-power engine can, of course, be fixed to a cart, but the cart will break into pieces when it starts.

I was 20 in 1956, when perestroika was initiated by Khrushchev. However, it was not seen through. The leaders and advocates of current perestroika still remember that first revolt against the bureaucratic apparatus. But, then, bureaucracy prevailed. Therefore, when the green light on the road of perestroika stays on slightly longer than usual, protests are heard, and the red light is switched on.

Nevertheless, the locomotive of perestroika is slowly rolling ahead. The family contract is spreading in the countryside, cooperatives are being set up, and workers are buying the shares in their factories. These processes are forging ahead, but they are constantly endangered by bureaucracy. The blank spots of the thirties, forties and fifties are being eliminated in the fields of history, literature and the arts. The undeservedly forgotten names of statesmen, poets, philosophers and scientists are being brought back to public knowledge from high rostrums.

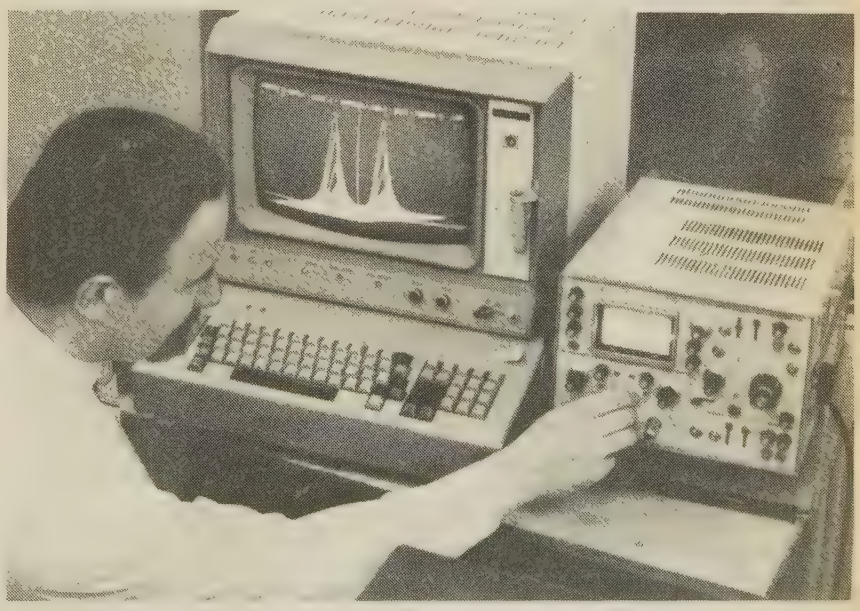
At the meeting in Alma-Ata last September to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the birth of the outstanding Kazakh novelist Mukhtar Auezov, I spoke of the fate of his teachers, the poet Shakarim in particular. Famine caused by sweeping collectivization began in Kazakhstan in 1930. It took the lives of many people. Shakarim did not die of hunger, however. He was shot, without investigation or trial, by a local militiaman simply because he spoke out against arbitrary rule.

This proved enough to strike the poet's name from the history of Kazakh literature. Several generations of our schoolchildren have not even heard of Shakarim. None of his verses have been published to this day.

The writers of the republic have been demanding rehabilitation of Shakarim since the 20th Party Congress, but to no avail. It was only in April of this year that a decision was adopted to publish Shakarim's poems. His legacy is being returned to the people.

Commissions of writers and scholars have been set up to study the work of Makzhan Zhumabayev, Tusupbek Aimautov, Akhmet Baitursunov and other distinguished Kazakhs illegally persecuted in their time.

For me these events are a convincing proof of the humane essence of perestroika.



The cooperative Engineer, formed at the Institute of Civil Aircraft Engineers in Riga, helps put inventions into practice. Cooperatives are being set up in various fields of endeavour in the Soviet Union.

TASS photo

Svyatoslav Fyodorov,
Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences

As I was signing paychecks for employees at the eye microsurgery clinic, one of the guests in my office looked over my shoulder and commented that such paychecks should be shown on television. What surprised him was how much we paid our staff. For instance, doctor Sinedubskaya earned 1,500 rubles a month, engineer Semyonov – 650, trained nurse Tyomkina – 470, and attendant Popova – 310.

I regard this as a tangible achievement of perestroika as far as our clinic is concerned. The state has assessed the worth of our effort and said: the more you work, the better for everyone, both for you and for us. The more patients you treat, and the better you do it, the more money you will get for your work, with virtually no restrictions. Thirty-two per cent of what we now earn goes to our staff in salaries.

This practice has revolutionized our attitude to work. Our efficiency has grown incredibly. Previously we performed 120 operations a day and thought it the best we could do. Now we operate 350-400 patients a day. Nor, I am sure, is this the limit to our potential. It is only in a situation where a man knows that his pay depends on his performance that he stops fearing his boss and being slavishly dependent on him; now his well-being depends solely on the results of his work. Yesterday, a young surgeon made a mistake: he removed the stitches from a patient's eye too soon after an operation. As a result, the sutures opened. Previously, I would certainly have taken him to task. But now I simply told him, in so many words, that all the expenses involved in treating the patient and correcting the consequences of his bad work would be deducted from his pay. We shall treat the patient for 10 days at a cost of, say 250 rubles, which will come from the botcher's pocket. I am sure that had I merely reprimanded him, he would have forgotten all about the incident in a day or two. And now he will know to his own cost that he'd better do good work.

When sitting in on various sessions I often marvel at how serious adults play children's games like: "Let this be a warning to you," and so on. That's kid stuff. Who cares for such reproofs? They are reminiscent of the world described by the writer Zamyatin. It's my conviction that if a man makes a mistake he must pay for it, in the literal sense of the word. His bad work must affect him directly; if it doesn't, he goes on making mistakes.

So why aren't many of us interested in the results of our work? The answer is: we've built up a system under which it makes no difference to us whether we work well or badly. I mean our bureaucratic system. Because if someone in charge depends on the results of his work, he is not a bureaucrat but a manager. His pay depends on the profits returned by the system he manages.

In a certain period of our history – the early years after the Revolution, to be exact – bureaucratization was probably necessary because, having fought its way to power at the cost of much bloodshed, the proletariat proved unable to manage industry. The old managers had fled, and new ones were still to be trained. Hence the need for setting up the people's commissariats, central boards and trusts, i.e., concentrating management in the hands of those who knew at least the rudiments of it. Gradually, this temporary measure aimed at helping illiterate workers get a higher education and master production tools and modern technologies became a permanent one. The bureaucrat who is not himself dependent on results has become the main figure. Producer goods, made national property by the Revolution, have become the property of bureaucrats who are not responsible for them and do not care if they are in order, broken, or used at all... Meanwhile, the bureaucrats' own lifestyle is quite unaffected; they are fairly well off, as a rule.

Our economists have largely helped the bureaucrats to become what they now are. We put all our incomes in "one basket" and, most importantly, have no say in profit distribution, although the right to have a share in the profits is one of our most important revolutionary gains. I hope perestroika will make up for what we've lost and bring us back to a correct evaluation of our work. If your pay is inadequate for your job, for whatever reason, that is unfair. It amounts to exploitation and reduces to nothing the advantages of our social system. As I see it, socialism means from each according to his ability, to each according to his socially useful **materialized** effort. Because one can simply report to work, engage in endless telephone conversations and make a nuisance of oneself, i.e., create a situation which Arkady Raikin described as follows: "I'd rather he stayed at home, in bed; we would have his salary delivered to him at home. He would do less harm then, as he is useless anyway."

The main objective of perestroika is to see what we produce, at long last, and learn how to distribute. Each should have a stake in our materialized socially useful effort, as all the workers at our clinic already do.

Marlen Khutsiyev,
film director, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R.

I do not feel that perestroika has had any effect on my life. My life-style remains largely what it has always been. I do not care much for airing my views in the press. I am too busy doing my work, making films and trying to do it as honestly as I can. I regard this as my contribution to perestroika. On the personal side, one of the things that, to me, epitomized perestroika to the greatest extent was the showing on national television of my film, "Ilych Gates Square" (also known as "I Am Twenty"). I believe viewers will find it of interest to see how the situation of over twenty years ago looks today.

The other day someone reproached me, with good reason, for having remade the picture. But, first of all, it was the head of the Party and government who ordered the remaking. Had it been demanded by Goskino, I would have fought for the original version. In this case I simply had no option: if I hadn't remade it, others would have. Lest the message of the picture be altogether lost, I had to do it myself, with the result that the new version still expressed my ideas, albeit not as sharply and straightforwardly as the original. It was an agonizing process. Recently I told a film critic acquaintance of mine that if I hadn't remade my film it would have been shelved, and probably it would have been better off there. "You are wrong," she replied, "that would have been awful. The picture was a milestone for us, and if you had acted differently, we wouldn't have seen it."

After those crushing attacks on my work I made my next film, "July Rain." In spite of everything, I did not betray my principles in it. The picture told a still more bitter story than the previous one. It's about a different period and a different generation. Some people accused it of being "anti-intelligentsia." Now this is utterly wrong. All I did was to show the intelligentsia at its shallowest and try to explain that it is not to blame for being what it is, that it has got to be that way as a result of certain circumstances beyond its control. Some might have missed the point, but I had really expected this because the kind of idiom I used was probably the only possible one at the time.

There is a lot of talk about Stalin now and about there having been no opposi-

Artists of Moscow's Peace Champions association and their local colleagues have staged a "Keep the Seaside Clean" action in Odessa.

Photo by K. Zvezdochetov

tion to him. This is not quite true. Not all of our nation was dumb. There were people who tried to oppose him. When they finally landed you know where, many of them didn't understand what was going on. Confined to prison cells, they sincerely hoped that justice would triumph soon... I am convinced that we must renounce Stalin, though not from the viewpoint of morality. Our society must provide a legal definition of his actions. I think it is about time we gave up the empty talk about whether he had the right to do this or that. Years later we have succeeded, after all, in proving that Bukharin and all those condemned with him were innocent. Justice in the highest sense of the word has been restored. So why don't we arrange another trial which would determine the degree of Stalin's and his accomplices' guilt? I think such a trial is necessary.

When Stalin is compared with Nero and Ivan the Terrible, his guilt becomes all the more obvious in all its inhumanity and magnitude. The emperor and the tsar were just true to type and products of their respective social systems. Therefore, I cannot call them criminals. The way I see them, they were villains, and their actions sort of fitted in with the ethical norms of their times. On the other hand, Stalin's deeds do not lend themselves to any ethical definitions. They were crimes, and should be qualified as such.

Archbishop Nikolai of Gorky and Arzamas

The Church has been playing an outstanding role in edifying both young people and adults for centuries. It has always opposed drunkenness, cemented the family and fought lechery and other vices. The changes now under way in our country make us hopeful that the Church will recover the historic position it has lost, take an active part in the life of society and inculcate Christian principles in people's souls.

Perestroika has a personal meaning for me. A veteran of the Great Patriotic War, I have recently been regranted my disability benefits, which the injuries I sustained at the front entitled me to. As for the affairs of the Church, we are opening some parishes near Gorky. I hope that the believers' dreams will come true and we'll have more churches in our part of the country.

Gennady Krepets,
surgeon

I came in for a pleasant surprise recently. Having bought a ticket for a foreign tour, I braced up to the exhausting predeparture red tape procedures such as doing the rounds of various offices, collecting all sorts of certificates and filling in endless questionnaires. Words fail me to describe my joy when it turned out that my fears were groundless. The questionnaire had been reduced by a third with only the most essential items left, the process of making out the papers had been considerably simplified, and I managed to go through all the formalities in a mere week. Many people did not go abroad because of these bureaucratic delays, scared by the prospect of hunting for permits, recommendations, references and so on. The idea was to select the very best, but it did not always work out that way.

Now we can say that foreign lands have come closer to us. It seems we now have more chances to see them, and not only on our TV screens or through the windows of an Intourist bus.

Another point I'd like to make is that in medicine perestroika is going much too slowly, considering the importance of keeping the nation healthy.

Boris Tarasov,
Chairman of the Dosug cooperative, Zhukovsky, Moscow Region

If perestroika is supposed to be the building of socialism in our country as a society of civilized cooperators, I could share with you my impressions of, and conclusions from, a meeting with engineers, team leaders, management and trade union representatives at a factory near Moscow. We discussed the formation of production teams there on a lease contract basis. The point is that my colleagues and I have some experience of working in a cooperative, and we are always prepared to provide advice and consultations which can be roughly described as management consultations.

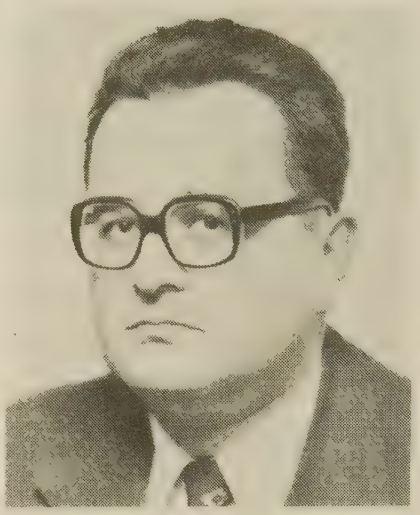
At the meeting, we discussed specific problems and plans and, as we went along, almost all those present – workers and managers alike – came to the conclusion that the formation of such lease contract teams and cooperatives would give an impetus to a steadier and more persistent effort towards the factory's changeover to full self-support. The advantages of such forms of work organization and remuneration as lease contracts and cooperatives stand out in strong relief against moribund (but diehard) current production practices with their emphasis on gross output, injunctive centralized planning and rigid raw material supply rationing.

In the course of the talk I satisfied myself that many people already realize there is no stopping the present and imminent changes in our economic mechanism. I think the law on cooperation in the U.S.S.R. will be of help here. We must become a society of civilized cooperators because there is simply no alternative. ■

EXCLUSIVE FOR NEW TIMES

An uphill climb

The Marshal of the Polish Sejm, ***Roman Malinowski,*** *discusses the similarities and differences between renewal processes in Poland and perestroika in the Soviet Union in an interview with our correspondent.*



New Times. Your political experience is extremely varied. You are Marshal of the Sejm and at the same time leader of the country's second biggest political party, the United Peasants' Party. Viewed from these posts, how do the current changes in the U.S.S.R. appear to you?

Roman Malinowski. The current fundamental changes in the home and foreign policies of the U.S.S.R. have entered the international political vocabulary as perestroika, democratization and glasnost. They are bringing about changes not only in other members of the socialist community, but in other nations as well. The world today resembles a system of communicating vessels. Let us look at what preceded perestroika over the past few decades. The political and economic social structures had become ossified and the principles of Marxism-Leninism themselves had turned from being quite clear-cut methods of understanding reality and means of determining the real progress of society into empty rhetoric and slogans.

N.T. In other words, from guidelines for action Marxism had turned into a dogma...

R.M. Exactly. Marxism was becoming dogmatic and increasingly divorced from reality. The present rate of development is so rapid that theory, which is supposed to be ahead of social progress, is simply not catching up. The reason for this is that practice is still running up against obsolete theoretical views adopted in the years gone by. Essentially, there emerge contradictions between the process of restructuring that has got under way and a fossilized theory that does not measure up to it. There have been attempts to reform the socio-economic development of the socialist countries in the past, but as you know, the initiatives rapidly petered out.

N.T. One reason for this appears to have been that those were half-measures that failed to cover the entire range of socio-political and economic problems.

R.M. We must learn from experience. The Soviet Union drew a fundamentally important conclusion from its previous experience, i.e., that the process of restructuring the economy must be backed up and go hand in hand with changes in the socio-political system, because slowing down in one sphere will inevitably result in lack of progress in the other. In my view, the key has been found to the general rather than partial development of society, and this paves the way for releasing the maximum physical and intellectual ability of the individual. I would like to repeat that an effective restructuring of the economy is impossible without the democratization of public life, which is in turn impossible without extensive openness. It is of great importance that people be encouraged to go ahead with restructuring so that they can feel their shared responsibility for the process of renewal.

N.T. If we go beyond the frontiers of the socialist community, what is your opinion of the significance of the current process of restructuring for the world at large?

R.M. As I have already pointed out, the world today, however politically and economically diverse it may be, resembles a system of communicating vessels. The current foreign policy of the Soviet government and the entire package of international initiatives constructed by Mikhail Gorbachev on the basis of a thorough analysis of the world today take full account of this. Our planet is becoming too small for us as the interdependence of various regions grows and what were once regional problems assume global significance. The rapid development of new technologies encourages dialogue and cooperation, which oust the endless ideologization of interstate ties and habitual confrontation from the sphere of international relations.

What has taken place over a mere 31 months between the first Soviet-American summit between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan in Geneva and their latest summit in Moscow fires the imagination of even seasoned politicians. We have come to realize that in its development the world does not follow a linear course in space or time. We now see that the period of creeping stagnation is giving way to a period of rapid acceleration and a qualitative leap, and that the policy of ideologization and confrontation is being abandoned in favour of cooperation and partnership. In that context peaceful coexistence as traditionally interpreted does not suffice. What we need is active cooperation. Mikhail Gorbachev's concept of a common European home incorporates the makings of a relationship whereby every nation, proceeding from the common European historical and cultural heritage while naturally preserving its national traits, can look boldly ahead. That is a beneficial process which, among other things, creates conditions conducive to the development of medium and small nations, because it raises their standing. New thinking guarantees the realization of humanity's hope for survival and gives a clue to easing tensions in the world.

When I think of the happy results of perestroika I recall the words of one of the most experienced Italian politicians, Amintore Fanfani, who told Mikhail Gorbachev during their meeting in Moscow that what is taking place in the Soviet Union gives hope to all of humankind, but failure would equally spell a tragedy for all of humankind. That is a very succinct summary of what is taking place in the

Soviet Union. Recently I met with the Chancellor of the F.R.G., Dr Helmut Kohl, who spoke highly of the new policy of the Soviet leadership. He asked me whether in my view you will succeed. I replied that the new policy is not a tactic, but strategy that follows logically from the historical evolution of Soviet society and is therefore irreversible. I would like to add now that such a chance is very infrequently given and that it must not be missed.

N.T. A search is now under way for a new model of socialism. Further democratization of the system is now bound up with the separation of the Party's and government's responsibilities in exercising power. How do you view the problem? How in your opinion could such a "coalition system" function in a socialist society?

R.M. We have some experience in this area. After the war the political system in Poland emerged on the basis of a coalition of left-wing parties and movements. This was followed, however, by a protracted period of distortion of the partnership which eventually led to a hierarchy within the coalition. This hurt the Communist Party itself as well as its "satellites," the other Polish parties and movements. The return of our society to political partnership on an equal footing is a strategy rooted in history. It does not imply uniformity: member parties of the coalition play different parts and occupy different positions in our society. The principle of equality and partnership remains intact and the stability of the coalition rests on concern for the partners, support and cooperation. The crucial condition for its functioning is the way in which the Polish United Workers' Party exercises its leading role.

N.T. Could you elaborate on the notion of the "leading role" of the Polish United Workers' Party within the framework of equality within the coalition?

R.M. The leading role of the Party must not be understood as the all-embracing and dominant power that has created an undemocratic atmosphere in the country. Once that sort of power is abandoned a great deal of social energy is released by every individual and the nation as a whole, and it strengthens the social base of the Party. The administration of the Party must not be the governing superstructure, but an operational subdivision.

The sphere of public activity and state power must be fully shared on a logically discrete basis by political parties, parliament and government. Each of these structures must realize its constitutional role. If one of them attempts to replace another, or worse still, substitute itself for all the others, it will automatically cease to perform its own functions and in the situation that will emerge the energy of society will be expended fruitlessly instead of being invested in progress.

I was greatly satisfied to find similar ideas in accounts of the discussions in the run-up to the 19th CPSU conference. This goes to show once again that our roots and goals are common.

N.T. The next question relates directly to your own political activity. As the leader of the Polish farmers' movement, how do you view the prospects for farming under socialism?

R.M. For quite some time Lenin's plan for cooperation in farming was equated to collectivization, but that was clearly wrong! Collectivization is one method that worked under a certain set of circumstances and only one of the many possible manifestations of Lenin's plan for cooperation. Lenin proceeded from the view that a family-owned farm is not an independent social entity because it is subservient to the fundamental state system.

In a capitalist society it is governed by capitalist laws and in a socialist society it becomes an integral cell thereof. Proceeding from that view, it is necessary to create conditions conducive to the development of all sectors of agriculture rather than set up, by command, a privileged sector. The principle fo voluntary choice must be abided by to enable every peasant to choose the form of farming that suits him best.

And the third principle is that of competition. Farming under socialism should rest on these three principles. We have now moved even further. We no longer divide our farming into cooperative, state-run, or private. We distinguish between good farms and bad farms. As a result, the individual sector in farming has become closely related to the state-run socialist economy. On many occasions farmers have extended political support for the socialist system at a time of crisis. We have good reason to believe that the trisectoral structure of farming in Poland is stable in the long term. The relationships between the sectors may of course vary but the principles remain the same, i.e., equality, clear prospects for every peasant, and free choice as to form of farming. These principles make for maximum efficiency in farming, to my mind.

N.T. The results of that policy are very much in evidence. There are piles of fresh vegetables on Warsaw's markets and you can buy anything –– chicory, asparagus, any kind of cabbage, celery, you name it. There are fruit and berries galore. This appears to be the only stable market in the country, if you consider the past 4 years.

R.M. That is correct. We have achieved good results in other areas as well. We have managed to get rid of the negative balance in the sale of foodstuffs, and the export of farm produce is increasing dramatically. In conclusion, let me make the following generalization. A democratic public life creates the basis for free economic play, and it is the duty of socialism to give everyone the same conditions to start off with.

N.T. The social and political changes under way in the Soviet Union give reason to believe that the 19th national CPSU conference will occupy a very special place in our history. What do you think?

R.M. I believe that we will look back on the proceedings of that conference as we now look upon the events of the October Revolution in Russia. To use a farming analogy, the first phase of perestroika is ploughing up the land, and the conference and its decisions will plant the seeds. The conference must play a very special part in releasing the latent energy of society and advancing new political thinking on an international scale, the more so as such a powerful and encouraging factor as the results of the Soviet-American summit in Moscow is already at work.

As I see it, the main issue before the conference is that of looking for and finding cadres for perestroika. The process that got under way in the U.S.S.R. in April 1985 is, among other things, a struggle against obsolescent views, psychology and stereotypes, but there are human beings behind all this. How can resistance to all that is new be overcome and how can progressives be promoted to positions of authority to create a powerful human resource for perestroika? That is a crucial problem. Recently I saw the Soviet film "Chairman" on TV, starring Mikhail Ulyanov. He is a remarkable actor, and he very wisely observed in his introduction to the film that at this stage there are guiet a few "reformers" who pay lip service to perestroika, but there are few who are prepared to put their shoulder to perestroika. I believe that the same applies to Poland.

N.T. Where can people prepared to put their shoulder to perestroika be found?

R.M. The mechanism of perestroika must work here, and I mean democratization and openness. There are such

people among us, but they may as yet be under pressure from bureaucracy. In Poland, we have so far failed to train a highly professional cadre of well-educated managers. I have a feeling that you have failed here too. In the past, managerial staffs were selected on the basis of curricula vitae that did not look for ability, but rather for conformity. A dense stratum of career bureaucrats has been evolving for decades, and breaking it up is no easy task. But it is necessary to break it up, because otherwise no reform will ever succeed. Within our own party we adopted a highly democratic electoral procedure a few years ago to rule out any conflict between the party apparatus and the opinions of voters. Elections are by secret ballot at all levels. There must be at least two candidates competing for every party post, including the top post. Nobody seeks to amend the lists of candidates from the top, or in any other direction. That mechanism has paid off abundantly, and the party has added new, capable and audacious people to its ranks, and its initiative and viability have increased.

N.T. A great deal has been said in the Soviet Union about the violations of democratic principles in nominating candidates to the 19th Party conference and about the interference of the Party apparatus, which amended the lists of candidates put forward from below in some parts of the country...

R.M. I have read reports to that effect, but it is clearly impossible to change overnight the command-administrative system of management which has been maintained for decades. The new democratic trends are still soft and pliant, and those against whom your people are now fighting are stony conservatives. If one is to look upon your great country with sympathy, and understanding of the proceses that are under way, the grandiose process of perestroika that has been started in the U.S.S.R. can only be welcomed. I recently attended a meeting of Nobel Prize winners in Rome. Bruno Kreisky, the former Austrian Chancellor, said there that what is taking place in the Soviet Union gives great hope to the whole world. He added that the man who began the renewal of the country and is at the head of perestroika is the second intellectual in the Soviet leadership after Lenin. I believe this to be of great importance for the successful development of perestroika.

Interviewer RUDOLF BORECKI

WARSAW

My experiences in Afghanistan

Following below are the extracts from the diary of Andrei Golovanchikov, a sergeant of the reserves. In 1984-85 he served with a limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan and was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for his combat exploits. Now Golovanchikov is a student of the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Relations.

September 1984

...A grey-green snake bristling with cannon began to move, breaking the usual silence of the gorge. It was our column. The regiment, including the 40 vehicles of our convoy, was stationed 200 kilometres from the divisional base. The last column returned from that area in the spring, and those who were with it, spoke with reticence of the surprises you might come up against at the mountain serpentine roads.

The monotonous rumble of the armoured vehicles in motion lulled me. In my thoughts I was at home. I recalled the old Arbat, saw in my mind's eye the monument to Minin and Pozharsky, green with time. Then the loudspeaker carried the voice of the platoon commander: "Attention! There's a village on the left." It was an ordinary village, just like dozens we had already passed. Almost indistinguishable against the grey-brown rock, one-storey adobe houses huddled together at the bottom of the gorge.

It would have been interesting to know if their inhabitants had any idea of running water. And what about electricity, gas and sparkling wines? Three men dwarfed by distance were pottering about on the bank of the river. They looked quite peaceful. There seemed no reason to expect any unpleasantness. Life was proceeding normally, and nobody seemed to notice the 40 dusty vehicles. Still, I sensed that there was something unusual about all that peace and quiet. It was not the first mission we had been on. We were regarded as veterans in our division. And I knew very well that it was in just such small villages as this that trouble starts. Isn't it funny how you can suddenly feel chilled when the temperature is plus 50 degrees Centigrade and you are wearing a tight titanium vest?

...The vehicles halted. The loudspeakers were silent. Our nerves were jarred by the explosion of a mine that had been spotted by sappers. The dense black mushroom of the explosion gave us a warning that we were on our own. Our 40 vehicles had 200 kilometres to cover. We had trusted to luck, but we faced mined roads. There were only a few dozen of our boys pitted against gangs of thousands beyond the mountain ridges. A second explosion went off almost immediately after the first one. Mines are usually placed at a certain distance from one another, and after spotting a mine it is possible to make some headway. This time it was different. The mines were placed right next to each other. It was quiet. We had passed many decaying villages, all of them deserted, but the last one...

Firing started at the head of the column. Volleys from the guns of infantry

Sergeants Pavel Lavrentyev and Andrei Golovanchikov in 1985.

combat vehicles were heard. A large-calibre machine gun installed in the vehicle of the chief of staff joined in. It was not clear where the moujahiddins had laid their ambush, but there were small angry bursts of dust everywhere. We had heavy cannons. Their calibre was five times that of the weapons of armoured troop carriers. The rebels' fire intensified, but we did not return it as we had no order to do so. Mechanics closed the hatches because bullets began hitting the armour. Our vehicles were armoured, but further down the line boys were riding in ordinary trucks loaded with shells...

"Number 13, I am number Three." The voice of the platoon commander is barely audible. "Permit us to return fire." "There is no order to fire," comes the answer. A red dot whizzed past between number Thirteen and number One. So this is what a shot from a grenade launcher looks like. It would take one hit to destroy a whole column, as the vehicles are close together and each carries several kilogrammes of TNT. Why is it that we don't return the fire? Five to eight shots would be enough to end the attack. "There has been no order." And what if we all are blown to pieces in a moment?

I hated the platoon commander now, and I could not get the boys in the civilian trucks out of my mind.

Another request to return fire and another refusal.

"Halt it," Sergei's broken voice is heard in the earphones. "Kondratiev is wounded."

"Number Four, who is speaking? Turn the turret!" The heavy turret revolved slowly, getting the hatch of the ammunition loader out of the firing line. A lieutenant rushing towards the vehicle was shouting something to the crew. Then the heavy steel door opened and Sergei's face emerged above the turret. He looked alarmed. Then he plunged down, and Kondratiev's face, very pale and with closed eyes, appeared above the hatch. A medic, the platoon commander and a master sergeant were dragging the body out of the turret, but they found this difficult, as Kondratiev was a burly boy. An inexpertly made bandage slipped, revealing a dark, torn perforating wound just below the left collarbone. It was a mortal wound. Valery was a gonner. A stupid question came from the lieutenant: "What was his patronymic?" Igor, the gunner, looked imploringly and demanded to be allowed to fire in return.

"Just a moment, Igor." I switched the radio set to the inner circuit, for communication with our unit only, so that nothing should interfere with the concentration on the target. I gave no thought as to what punishment firing without orders might entail. Our boys in civilian trucks were behind us, and Kondratiev must be dead by now. Moving automatically, I prepared the cannon for fire. The turret of the first vehicle started to move towards the houses at the same time as the turret of our vehicle. I lost all sense of time. I was firing. Sergei's cannon was going too. We gave battle to those beyond the adobe walls.

After the battle. Top right: Andrei Golovanchikov in 1984.

October 1984

...The column was moving in the wake of the engineers who had left it behind. The time gap was not to exceed 40 minutes - the time it took the moujahiddins to plant a high-explosion anti-tank mine. Having negotiated a turn, the platoon commander's machine stalleld – a stone had got stuck in a track. The column came to a standstill. The stone had stuck good and fast, and there was no extracting it. The gap was already thirty minutes. The lieutenant ordered us not to wait for him, so we rolled on. I was now leading the column. My headphones were silent. Ten minutes passed... Twenty minutes... Then came a grating sound which turned out to be the 4th platoon commander's voice. I looked back over my shoulders and saw a self-propelled gun mount with a track dislocated frozen to a halt on a turn. I had the option of either turning back and helping the 4th, leaving the road to moujahiddins, or abandoning the column and speeding ahead on my own in order to shorten the time gap. There were no commanders, no one to consult. I had to make a split-second decision, so I asked the 4th whether he could manage without my help. He said they could. O.K. then. On I go. I told the crew to pick up their arms and documents, to climb out and cling to outside grips. They stood more chances of survival that way in case we hit a mine. I braced myself to a mine blast each time the tank jerked on the bumpy road. Two of my men watched the road, and the other two, the cliffs. Finally, we rolled – or rather darted – out of the gorge, only to face two our armoured carriers. The machine guns opened up, but it felt almost good: no more uncertainty, and your targets are in plain sight.

January 1985

... Got a letter from Marina yesterday. She is going on a two-week vacation to Dombai. Says the crowd is terrific, there'll never be a dull moment. Am I jealous? Yes! I'll write that I wish her a good holiday, of course, but honestly, deep down, I envy her. In Dombai, the mountains must be quite different, not like these ones here. Shall we ever stop today? I'd enjoy a breather on a river bank, a swim and a wash...

In Moscow, I had mixed feelings about her, now I showed her off, now I was jealous. And now here I am, in an armoured shell easily pierced by an English anti-tank bullet. The tracks are rattling along a dusty road baked harder than asphalt by the scorching sun. The hatches are open but I am suffocating with heat all the same. We had dated for nearly a year before I was called up. We spent my last night in civvy street together, and gave each other no solemn oaths, no promises, none of that rubbish... Now I have a two weeks' march ahead of me, and I hope it will go without shooting. The engine is roaring, the road is swaying monotonously in the eyeslit, nothing's changing. I know I'll make it.

February 1985

...In the morning, just before we set off, the headquarters ordered us to leave two

machines behind in the regiment. I wonder why is it my crew that always has to stop such gaps? I had words with the battalion commander, and now twenty-seven tons of iron plus the crew are rolling along the Afghan roads again, and each time we approach a gorge, I just cannot suppress a wave of sickly fear which sends cold sweat streaming down my back. It helps to know that I'm not alone here, that the boys are right alongside, that thirty more machines like ours, manned with guys you can rely on, are ahead and behind you. You forget all about fear because there is simply no time for feeling scared, because you are not alone but doing your work together with others.

March 1985

...It had happened early in March. After a long march we were about to stop in a large village to rest. The faces of our lads, during the march as grim and dull as the Afghan roads, had brightened. I too was smiling as I looked at a bunch of children who were running along with the column and waving at us. After an exhausting march, the most difficult of those in which I had taken part so far, it was refreshing to see smiling little kids who had as yet no grasp of the situation. Winding streets spread out like cracks on glass. Bazaars were bustling.

I did not immediately notice the old woman in a dirty chador who sat leaning against the crumbling wall of a small shop. Looking around, I just glanced at her. Something made me to take a second look at this solitary figure. I had a sudden unpleasant sensation, like a splash of ice-cold water on sun-scorched skin. The festive spirit was gone. I saw melancholy- looking eyes gazing at me from under strands of gray hair. The woman stood up and, stooping, walked away to the dark opening in the wall of the decrepit adobe house. And for the third month now, when I close my eyes, I see that old Afghan woman, sometimes when I am resting, and sometimes when we are on the move.

June 1985

Our column was returning to its base after a battle. A halt was ordered. The vehicle stopped before a large puddle that miraculously had not dried out in this scorching sun. After a ten-minute halt in this sweltering heat we were given the order to move on. It was a wide puddle, impossible to skirt. We slowly entered the pool. The rebels like to spring surprises, and a large mine could well have been placed in such a puddle. But we were calm as some ten vehicles had passed on this road before us. I knew nothing about command-fired mines... I was swept

Valery Dyomin – "Dyoma." The last photo, 1985.

away from the hatch of the turret. My face was singed. I felt giddy... Then I felt only the pain in the back of my head and face. I was anxious about my eyes. Could I see all right? Yes, I could... "Is everybody all right?" Somebody answered reluctantly: "Dyoma is dead..." Yes, Dyoma was a mechanic, and mechanics are usually the first to perish when a vehicle strikes a mine. That is logical. So, Dyoma's death was logical...

Then there was a call from the division's headquarters and the mechanic's body, wrapped in a cape, was taken to the division's location. And I spent two weeks at the medical battalion. Time dragged slowly by...

July 1985

...When on the march I didn't think about medals. All I wanted was to get back to the regiment. Back from the field hospital, I was in for a pleasant surprise: rather surprised to learn that I had been awarded with the Red Star Order. I couldn't even believe that at first. Sergei told me that seven more boys had got the For Valour medals and two – Kondratyev and Dyoma – Red Stars... That made three Stars, two of them given posthumously. I felt guilty towards those who would never know they had been decorated.

August 1985

We spent a quarter of an hour in a stationary vehicle. It was calm. A peach, a handful of cherry plums or a few apricots, such as those that filled our kit bags during the previous mission, would have been refreshing. Quite near, at a distance of some 40 metres, there was a copse dividing a watermelon field...

In dusty fatigues, carrying an empty bucket in one hand and a submachine gun in the other, I approached the trees the like of which I had never seen before. Their fruits were neither plums, nor cherries, nor cherry plums. Hardly had I stretched out my hand to the berries than there was a sound, as if a bumblebee were buzzing over my head, and a branch rustled. I squatted and looked round trying to establish where the shot had come from. No report was heard, so the bullet must have been fired from far off. Perhaps it was a stray bullet. I stretched out my hand to the berries again. And again a bullet whizzed by, cutting several leaves a metre from my head. I fell face down as I had been trained to do, the empty bucket rolling away with a clatter.

...This must be a warning: "This is ours, not yours. Hands off!" I was still determined to get the berries. I rushed to the tree, grabbed the biggest berry-laden branch with both hands and started to tear it from the trunk. A third bullet whistled by quite near. So you have learned how to shoot, haven't you, you bastards? To hell with it, I don't want these berries all that much. I wish I were back in the armoured car...

READ NEW TIMES IN GREEK

Since January 1988 New Times has been published monthly in Greek by Nei Keri Elladas, EPE, Athens.

If you wish to take a yearly subscription to the Greek-language edition, send a 20-dollar cheque to Nei Keri Elladas, EPE, Nikis 24, 105 57 Athens, or transfer the above sum to its account No. 104/470838-57 in the National Bank of Greece S.A., Syntagma Sq. branch 10, 6 Karageorghi Servias Str., indicating your name, address and telephone No.

Yearly subscription: 20 U.S. dollars

Price of one issue: 1.60 U.S. dollar (postage included)

All the previous issues of the Greek-language edition can be ordered.

Nikis 24, 105 57, Athens, Greece

Tel: 3257392, 3233463

Nei Keri Elladas EPE

Hyde Park, socialist style

The hall at the Soviet Peace Committee where the debating society on Peace and Human Rights holds its meetings is always jampacked. Some of the speeches make even professional Western human rights experts shake their heads in wonder.

The society, or club, was set up late last year to discuss such issues as perestroika and human rights, the right to peace as a fundamental human right, freedom of conscience. Subjects that used to be considered taboo and are now referred to as "acute" are discussed with complete frankness.

A young man says it is time to look into who really started the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-40.

A young activist from the Doveriye (Trust) group questions the concept of compulsory military service.

A worker from Novocherkassk gives an account of the workers' strike in 1962 and how it was quashed.

Sergei Grigoriants, the publisher of the bulletin Glasnost (who has been sharply criticized by several Moscow newspapers), makes comments on the current political situation.

The speakers are challenged, often sharply and sometimes convincingly.

The new club is a long overdue social experiment in whose success we all have a stake. The club provides premises for the phenomenon of absolute freedom of speech. I can hear the question, is it right to give the floor to those who speak about things that are not in the newspapers?

To begin with, it is a delicate matter. The newspapers today are writing about things they did not dare write about yesterday.

Secondly, before an idea finds its way into a newspaper it has to be aired somewhere: in the privacy of an office, among supporters or opponents. It is high time we learned to distinguish between calls to overthrow the Soviet government and crap the principles of socialism, and criticism, disagreement with current political decisions, and the desire to change, improve and reform society. No matter that this desire is expressed in a sharp form – impartiality in this case often signifies lack of genuine commitment. "Mature logic," wrote Herzen, "hates canonized truths, it strips them of their angelic status, turns sacred mysteries into open truths, considers nothing to be untouchable, and if the republic arrogates to itself the same rights as the monarchy, it despises it as much as the monarchy, nay, indeed far more."

At meetings of the Peace and Human Rights club you can hear not just utterances that might titillate the naive. You can hear some interesting ideas for new legislation, ideas that could prompt important changes in social life and concepts that until recently seemed alien to our way of life. Even if it achieves nothing else, we should be grateful to the founders of the club for awakening the spirit of intellectual inquiry.

This spirit was very much in evidence at the meeting devoted to the discussion of the Motions of the CC CPSU for the 19th Party Conference. The discussion covered such issues as the yardsticks and criteria of socialism, the motive forces of perestroika, social and moral priorities in the development of society, the role of the Party, the true content of the notion of "socialist pluralism" – still a moot-point – and the absence of an adequate mechanism for regulating interethnic relations. Some challenged the fact that in the Motions, non-government organizations seem to have no say in shaping the country's foreign policy.

Discussions on human rights, which previously came to us from abroad, are given their due, as in the final analysis disarmament and economic development, democratization and glasnost offer greater opportunities for the individual to fulfil his potential. Every step along the road of perestroika broadens the base for the exercise of the human rights declared in the Constitution and in international human rights covenants.

We should take a long hard look at habitual formulas. On the face of it, abiding by the law is always good, and breaking the law is always bad. But laws and justice are not the same thing. Marx wrote: "The press law is the legal recognition of the freedom of the press. It constitutes right, because it is the positive existence of freedom. It must therefore exist even if it is never put into application... whereas censorship, like slavery, can never become lawful, even if it exists a thousand times over as a law." Free-thinking jurists have always upheld "natural law," the human rights the state should never impinge upon. Man lives within a state and a social system, and the freedom of the individual is always limited. But legislative recognition of human rights defines clear boundaries for state interference, whereby the state gives it to be understood that it does not consider itself all-powerful and does not intend to encroach upon the intellectual autonomy of the individual.

One final point! Human rights are not like Sunday best clothes which you keep in your wardrobe to wear on special occasions: some day when we live well we can perhaps afford to wear them every day. It is in hard times that human rights are needed most for they protect the individual's honour and dignity. We must hurry to enshrine these rights in our national legislation. This is the keynote of the discussions in the Peace and Human Rights club.

The abundance of ideas generated in the debates at the Soviet Peace Committee vindicate the idea of the club, the most informal of all informal associations. It should continue to be like this, allowing anyone to come and air his or her views. Let us hope the problems now being debated will be solved in the foreseeable future, and that we shall learn to talk freely and openly elsewhere as well. But even then, the club will serve a useful purpose. For one thing, human rights is an area where there is infinite room for improvement. For another, the history of London's Hyde Park attests that there must be a place where a person can come and say anything. These speeches contain grains and sometimes nuggets of precious metal.

Leonid Mlechin

Festival of Afro-American culture

Inspired by the successes of growing Soviet-American cooperation, our reporter Irina Lagunina decided to embark on a "joint venture" with Gwen McKINNEY, a journalist from Washington, to cover a festival of Afro-American culture in Moscow.

On receiving the programme of the Moscow Afro-American festival and the list of participants from the Ministry of Culture, I learned that American journalists had also been invited. Would any of them agree to undertake a "joint venture" with me, I wondered. My offer was accepted by Gwen McKinney.

Irina Lagunina. By a lucky chance, the festival coincided with a tour of the Soviet Union by the famous Dance Theatre of Harlem led by its artistic director Arthur Mitchell. For many people the performances were a discovery of America and its contemporary ballet.

Asked why he had decided to form the troupe after the death of Martin Luther King, Mitchell said he felt the need to express himself, and to continue the cause of the great black leader.

Gwen McKinney. I must say that distinguished black leaders have played a great role in the advancement of Afro-American culture and the black community as a whole. Take, for example, the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign. In its very essence it represented a challenge to the American mainstream society to accept the Afro-American experience in all its forms – politically, socially and culturally. The fact that Jackson raised the issues of racism and injustice and articulated the concerns of black Americans, and actually gained support from considerable sectors of the white society, offers hope for the future. In both concrete and indirect terms, Jackson's campaign will force the American society to acknowledge the contributions of Afro-American culture to U.S. society and the world.

I.L. Let us return to the subject of the festival, the more so in that we had an opportunity to talk with the jazz historian Hugh Hassan.

G.M. Asked what he thought about the present-day jazz music and Afro-American jazz performers, Hugh Hassan said:

"Some of our performances only draw black audiences. A black American, however, needs the support of more than just black audiences to ensure his survival as an artist, for his financial support is based on box-office takings. To reach wider audiences some jazz artists dilute their work and change the structure of the music to make it more accessible.

"On the other hand, even black audiences support more popular artists than jazz artists. Because jazz is played mainly in the universities and colleges, and not on stages where a lot of the black community can listen to it. In this lies one of the reasons for the decline of interest in jazz."

Asked if there was the alternative to the commercializaton of jazz, Hugh Hassan said:

"Those musicians who are performing jazz as an art should have some form of subsidies to be able to make a living from their art. In most of the European countries it is so. This does not concern music alone."

I think that would be useful, as in the case of visual black artists. Major exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad have failed to include Afro-American artists.

I think it would be interesting for your readers to know the opinion of Howardena Pindell, an American artist who took part in the festival.

Below is the transcript of the interview with the artist.

I.L. You have worked in museums for twelve years and taught for nine years, and have been painting pictures all this time. What would you say about Afro-American painting as a whole?

Howardena Pindell. Many tendencies in modern art today were foreseen by the black artists. For example, there is an artist named Bob Thomson who did a kind of painting that is now called expressionism. He did it in the 1850s when no one else was doing it.

A scene from Stravinsky's "Firebird" performed by members of the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

G.M. Many of the most popular Afro-American artists share a common theme of optimism in their work using bright colours and a sense of vibrancy – Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Joseph Houston...

H.P. This is also a distinguishing feature of Afro-American art as a whole. Not long ago a book on Afro-American painting was brought out in the United States. It is a very interesting publication, both in its content and design – white letters on the black pages. I think this book will help our artists make their work known nationally and will rally them.

I.L. That's very interesting. Gwen, what do you think about the festival which has just ended?

G.M. Historically, the Afro-American cultural contribution has been made on some level to the Soviet people dating back to the concert performances of Paul Robeson, Josephine Baker, Richard Wright and other less famous artists. These cultural contacts were made even during the McCarthy era, when Americans were persecuted for daring to build bonds of friendship with the people of the Soviet Union. In that sense the festival was a continuation and elaboration of the ties already begun...

Mariya Kalinina – Miss Moscow '88

Photo by A. Knyazev

FLY AEROFLOT TO THE CAUCASUS AND THE CRIMEA

АЭРОФЛОТ
Soviet airlines

A holiday problem?
Black Sea resorts in the Crimea and Caucasus is the answer.
The world-famous Soviet Black Sea health resorts mean:
– more than 200 sunny days a year;
– miles of golden beaches;
– a bather's paradise (seawater temperatures: 24 to 26 C, bathing season from May to November);
– picturesque mountain scape, lush subtropical vegetation;
– salubrious spas;
– comfortable hotels and sanatoriums.
The fastest way to get there is by Aeroflot!

For details about the most convenient routes contact the Aeroflot agency in your country.

ИНДЕКС 70622 НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ Я